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# SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/38, A/45/202, A/45/222, A/45/225, A/45/230, A/45/254, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/269, A/45/270, A/45/426; A/C.3/45/5)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/347, A/45/489, A/45/548; A/C.3/45/5)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to begin consideration of the third cluster of items.

2. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that in March 1990 the Commission on the Status of Women had carried out the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and had concluded that although there had been some progress, it had not been as great as expected. If the same pace continued in the future, the chances of achieving the goals set in Nairobi for the year 2000 were nil. The Commission had recommended different steps that could remove the obstacles to the effective implementation of the Nairobi Strategies. The Economic and Social Council had adopted those recommendations, which were contained in the annex to Council resolution 1990/15. The recommendations were practical and realistic, reflecting the diversity of different countries.

3. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a powerful instrument in the service of women's rights. There were currently 104 States parties to the Convention, an increase of six since 1989. The Division for the Advancement of Women sought to encourage more countries to ratify the Convention and had gone into the field to assist countries to examine the whole complex of questions in that regard. The recent commemorative seminar on the Convention held in September in the Soviet Union had made specific recommendations on the implementation of the Convention. A similar seminar would be organized in March 1991 for the countries of the South Pacific Forum most of which were not States parties.

4. The work with political and administrative authorities at the national level was an essential aspect of the Division's activities and enabled it to become acquainted with the practical problems arising in the implementation of the Convention. It also provided an opportunity for Member States to exchange information about their experience in specific areas and focus attention on the daily lives of the most disadvantaged groups of women. The work of promoting dialogue and the exchange of information was one of the most important aspects of co-operation between Governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

5. The tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention in September 1991 would be an excellent opportunity to bring together the States that had not yet ratified the Convention and the States parties. Ratification,

(Mrs. Sellami-Meslem)

however, was only the first step towards implementation of the Convention. For the Convention to become an effective instrument, women must become familiar with their legal rights and the ways to exercise them under their national legal systems. The promotion of equality was part of the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Through the Committee, the Division sought to provide the service of experts for seminars and advisory missions.

6. One of the major obstacles to the advancement of women was their low representation in public decision-making. The Economic and Social Council had recommended a number of steps to improve women's participation in decision-making at all levels. In the annex to resolution 1990/15, the Council had set a specific target: Governments, political parties, trade unions and other professional representative groups should aim at targets to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30 per cent by 1995. The task of the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life, to be held in September 1991 in Vienna, was to elaborate for the first half of the decade an agenda for political action that would mobilize all women to participate actively in the political process. To ensure success, the Consultation must have the full participation of Member States, receive adequate media attention and be carefully prepared. It would provide an opportunity for women political leaders from all over the world to discuss key issues and develop networks across traditional boundaries. The world conference on women to be held in 1995 should be used by women in all countries to promote national efforts for the advancement of women. The focus must be on the preparation process at the national level, self-diagnosis, and the identification of obstacles and steps to overcome them. Preparations for the conference would be one of the principal activities of the Division during the next four years. Together with WHO, the Division had just held in Vienna a seminar on the relationship between the status of women and AIDS. The social consequences of AIDS and the means to deal with them had been among the topics discussed. Expert meetings, the exchange of information and national experience, and institutionalizing legal progress through the Convention were ways in which the Division was developing its programmes and activities in favour of the advancement of women.

7. Ms. HABACHY (Focal Point for Women, Office of Human Resources Management) said that the report of the Secretary-General on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) described the work carried out between November 1989 and September 1990. The current operative target for the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution was 30 per cent by the end of December 1990. As of 30 June 1990, the figure of 28.3 per cent had been reached. Although short of the target, that figure represented a 1.5 per cent increase over the previous year. It was the highest increase in four years and was all the more significant since it followed closely on the retrenchment exercise, in which over 500 Professional and higher-level posts had been eliminated. In order to reach the target of 30 per cent, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) estimated that another 40 women were needed. Of those, 13 were already employed in the Secretariat and 14 more had received or were about to receive letters of appointment. The shortfall, therefore, amounted to only 13 women.

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(Ms. Habachy)

8. Early in 1990, additional special measures had been instituted to reach the target of 30 per cent by the end of the year. The number of women recruited as well as the overall number of promotions of women had been higher in 1990. Those special measures were described in the report under consideration and were currently under review. Most of them would be continued in order to maintain momentum in that regard.

9. Improving the status of women in the Secretariat did not depend on numbers and targets alone. OHRM was always mindful of the need to ensure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Furthermore, measures to redress the problem of the absence of women at the higher and decision-making levels were clearly needed. Table 3 in the report constituted a new monitoring device, providing information on four groups of departments and offices in the Secretariat according to sex distribution of staff. The Office planned to monitor very closely the departments and offices in group IV, where the percentage of women was below the 20 per cent mark. It expected the departments and offices in groups II, III and IV to move into the category above their current one during the next year.

10. Representation throughout regions was far from uniform. Table 2 of document A/45/548 provided figures on Professional staff by region and gender and gave the percentages of women in such posts. There was an urgent need for women candidates especially from those countries which did not have women in posts subject to geographical distribution. The Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat continued to make recommendations to the Secretary-General on ways to improve the status of women. The Steering Committee's annual report to the Secretary-General would focus on specific ways to advance the careers of women in the Secretariat and would be available shortly.

11. Career development for women in the General Service category had been the subject of several OHRM initiatives, including the Career Development Handbook for Headquarters General Service staff, designed to assist staff in evaluating and plotting their career paths. A similar handbook was planned for Professional staff. Women had played a prominent role in 1990 in peace-keeping and peace-making missions. About 45 per cent of the staff assigned to the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia had been women. Many of them had taken on functions traditionally thought to be reserved for men. They had showed that when given the chance, they excelled. Accordingly, steps must be taken to ensure that future such operations included a large number of women. In improving the status of women in the Secretariat, OHRM required the support of the Member States, many of which had already responded by nominating focal points in their missions. The continued help of Member States in proposing qualified women to fill vacancies and their support for the numerical targets were needed in order to achieve equality between women and men in the Secretariat.

12. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that the Fund had been established in 1976 to highlight women's contributions to national development and to mobilize new resources for women's development efforts. Nearly 14 years later, those efforts were beginning to pay off, transforming the way development issues were perceived.

13. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) essentially worked with and on behalf of women in developing countries. UNIFEM had concentrated on two areas of strategic importance: women's role in promoting food security and support for microenterprise activities. The Fund covered the entire food-cycle from production all the way through distribution and marketing of staple food crops, promoting women's involvement through such activities as training in new agricultural techniques, transfer of appropriate food technologies, and increasing women's access to credit.

14. Food-cycle activities had been concentrated in Africa owing to the acute food shortages in that region. The Fund was currently preparing a major new initiative in Africa and expected to increase its activity in other regions as well, in collaboration with national and international agencies.

15. While they had always been a part of food-security programmes, environmental issues would be receiving increasing attention. Sustainable development meant integrating women fully into the management of the world's natural resources. In that connection, the Fund would endeavour to make the issue of women and the environment a priority at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

16. The second strategic area was the promotion of microenterprise activities, in particular the small-scale manufacturing and trading activities in which most poor women participated. The Fund concentrated on identifying the problems women faced in setting up and operating microenterprises; helping them develop creative approaches to overcoming any obstacles; and assisting them in gaining more access to credit, training marketing advice and improved technologies. It was currently developing a comprehensive programme to provide support for female entrepreneurs.

17. UNIFEM had long understood that women's ability to participate in production activities in general was greatly diminished by the enormous amount of time spent in gruelling domestic work. Thus it recognized that making time and labour-saving technologies widely available to women was crucial to the success of the Fund's programmes. While some progress had been achieved, greater attention should be focused on that issue in the current decade. More efforts were also needed at the planning level in order to create a solid framework within which direct support activities could flourish. Among the steps to be taken were implementation of measures to strengthen women's national machineries and to increase the participation of women in all levels of policy and planning.

18. UNIFEM had used the past 18 months to consolidate its growth; enhance its management capacity; and clarify its aims and strategies. To that end, it had redeployed and consolidated its staff, hired local personnel and developed and

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(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

implemented budget, programme and work management systems, so that the Fund could operate more efficiently.

19. Contributions to UNIFEM were on the rise. In 1989, the Fund's total income had been almost $12 million and it was predicting an increase of at least 15 per cent in core resources for 1990. Of particular note were significant increases by Finland, Canada, Sweden, Italy, the United Kingdom and Zaire. Besides their substantial core contributions, the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands and Italy had provided multi-year financing for special UNIFEM projects in Africa. In addition, Iceland and the former German Democratic Republic had become new donors in 1990.

20. By the end of 1990, there would be 10 UNIFEM national committees; in addition, six other countries were interested in forming committees. The active interest in the Fund shown by women's organizations and networks world wide was an indicator of the vital role that such groups could play in building a global constituency for UNIFEM.

21. The leadership of women had rarely been acknowledged. To fill that gap, UNIFEM had established the Noel Awards, an honour to be awarded every two years to distinguished women leaders. In October 1990, the first Noel Awards had been presented to Corazon Aquino, Benazir Bhutto, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Margaret Thatcher. It was to be hoped that the event would serve to increase public awareness of UNIFEM and to create and sustain new financial support for it from the independent sectors.

22. She wished to draw attention to a recent UNIFEM publication, "Women on the Agenda", which provided an assessment of the Fund's experience during the period 1985-1990. While there had been impressive successes in building gender awareness, establishing institutional mechanisms for drawing attention to women's issues and in mobilizing resources, UNIFEM was still far from achieving sustainable development or improving the living and working conditions of most women.

23. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria) said that, as stated in the letter of 11 October 1990 from his Government to the Secretary-General (A/C.3/45/5), Austria had extended an invitation to the United Nations to hold the world conference on women in 1995 at Vienna. In addition, his Government was also prepared to host a non-governmental organizations forum as an ancillary meeting to the conference. Austria would be glad to work closely with the United Nations in order to provide the best facilities for the event. His Government was certain that its invitation represented a major contribution to the cause of the advancement of women.

24. Ms. ANSELMI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that, according to the Commission on the Status of Women, the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies over the last five years seemed to have lost momentum and even reached a point of stagnation in some countries. That phenomenon was linked to entrenched resistance to the advancement of women and a decrease in the resources available for social progress as a result of recent economic and political changes in certain countries.

(Ms. Anselmi, Italy)

25. It was clear that many of the objectives could not be attained by the year 2000. At the same time, the Twelve were firmly convinced that it was time to give priority to removing the major obstacles to the implementation of the Strategies. While the United Nations had an important role to play in setting standards and monitoring implementation, responsibility for corrective measures rested mainly with Governments. In that connection, the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women and subsequently by the Economic and Social Council provided a number of relevant proposals for economic, legal and practical action at the national level. Implementation of such action was the objective of the European Community's Third Equality Action Programme, covering the period 1991 to 1995, which would include strategies related to the relationship between personal, family and professional life and women's participation in decision-making processes.

26. The Twelve reaffirmed their belief that the new working methods established two years ago by the Commission on the Status of Women was very useful: the restructured agenda and in-depth discussions of priority themes provided excellent guidance for policy-making in specific areas. It was very important for the Secretary-General, in consultation with Governments, to review and find ways to improve the existing mechanisms for reporting on the status of women at the national level.

27. At its thirty-fifth session, the Commission on the Status of Women would concentrate on three priority themes: equality, development and peace. Those themes had been taken up in the Secretary-General's report (A/45/489), which was noteworthy for the breadth of its approach and its assessment of recent developments.

28. The Twelve agreed that special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups which required immediate action at the national and international level, in particular, women as heads of households, elderly women and disabled women. The Commission should identify specific measures for each group and, in that connection, the meeting of the expert group in Vienna scheduled for November 1990 should yield useful recommendations.

29. Priority should also be given to the situation of migrant women, particularly with respect to protection of family unity, employment opportunities and working conditions, and health care.

30. The Twelve were convinced that development could not take place without the effective participation of women. The emphasis should be on providing the infrastructure and machinery which would enable women to participate in economic growth; that meant increasing the involvment of women at the levels of decision-making and management. Such involvement implied in turn the need to enact the appropriate social measures, such as setting up child care facilities and granting parental leave, and to ensure women's legal rights.

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(Ms. Anselmi, Italy)

31. It was important to ensure that women's concerns were incorporated in all relevant national policies and programmes. The participation of women in development should be part of sectoral policies and mainstream programmes. The Commission on the Status of Women should play a leading role in assisting Governments in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and in promoting exchanges between Governments at the regional and international levels. It was also necessary to involve non-governmental organizations in all those activities and to encourage dialogue at the grass-roots level.

32. With respect to the theme of refugees and displaced women and children, efforts should be concentrated on finding ways to eliminate the root causes of the flow of refugees. The Twelve agreed that the vulnerable situation of women and children required specific measures for immediate relief assistance, particularly in the countries of first asylum. Relief assistance should also continue to be provided to returnees and the Twelve supported the activities of UNHCR, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies in that field.

33. The European Community welcomed the convening of a world conference on women in 1995. The conference would provide a good opportunity to review the progress made in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies. It would give the international community the chance to demonstrate that it had the political will to implement the measures needed to equalize women's status.

34. The conference should be carefully prepared in advance, with due regard being given to keeping costs down. The United Nations and the Governments concerned should develop a co-ordinated information strategy, including adequate national and international media coverage. As part of the preparatory activity for the conference, an interregional consultation on women in public life was to be held in September 1991 at Vienna. With regard to the consultation, the Twelve wished to stress the following: its success would depend on wide participation at the national and international level; a specific topic should be chosen as a focus within the broader framework of women in public life; and the final agenda, to be adopted at the consultation, should be action-oriented.

35. The European Women's Lobby composed of national and regional NGOs, had recently been established to serve as a forum for informal exchanges of views on women's issues. The Twelve wished to stress that, among the women's issues to be considered in the coming years, priority attention should be paid to the topics of women and the environment and the representation of women in senior posts in the United Nations Secretariat.

36. The Twelve reaffirmed their political will to take the necessary measures for the advancement of women at the national, regional and international level.

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37. Mrs. PETRITSCH-HOLADAY (Austria) said the year 1990 was very significant because it had witnessed the first five-year review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (FLS). On the basis of that review the international community would embark on the next five years of activity at the national, regional and international levels with the objective of implementing the demands of women in all parts of the world for a more equitable distribution of resources and power. As stated in the Note by the Secretary-General (A/45/347), the results of the review and appraisal had shown that progress in translating the Forward-looking Strategies into action had slowed down.

38. At the most recent sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the Economic and Social Council, a strong spirit of consensus had emerged, which augured very well for an acceleration in the pace of progress in the advancement of women, despite the obstacles raised by economic recession and retrenchment and a resurgence of traditional attitudes towards women. The conclusions and recommendations emanating from the first review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies provided a sound basis for action to be taken by Governments to improve the status of women and the adoption of practical measures for implementation at national and international level. If national and international institutions and machineries for the advancement of women were to be able to fulfil their mandates, they would need political and hierarchical strength and adequate human and material resources. It was essential for all Governments to recognize that women's questions formed an indispensable component of all social, economic and political issues and should not be treated as isolated phenomena, but as integral parts of all political and economic strategies, including those relating to environmental protection, economic restructuring, support for refugees and migrants and all areas of human rights.

39. The gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality between women and men made it necessary to implement short-term measures, especially in the field of employment. Such measures should be constantly revised and updated to take changing conditions into account. At the legal level, there was an urgent need to educate the entire population, both women and men, about women's rights and the possibilities for translating *de jure* equality into *de facto* equality. There was still a need to provide adequate legal and institutional facilities to enable women and men to combine working life with family and parental responsibilities. There was also a need for appropriate strategies in the field of communications media.

40. She reiterated Austria's satisfaction with the current practice of the Commission on the Status of Women, in which three priority themes were considered at each session on the basis of reports prepared by expert groups and the Secretariat, with a view to the preparation of action-oriented policies to deal with the problems identified. With regard to the first topic selected for consideration by the Commission in 1991 - "Equality: vulnerable women, including migrant women" - she said her Government agreed that immediate attention should be given to the formulation of measures to provide support for vulnerable women, including single heads of households, aging women and disabled women. As for migrant women, she noted the importance of ensuring that their rights were guaranteed and that they were fully informed about how to defend them.

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(Mrs. Petritsch-Holaday, Austria)

41. Regarding the second topic - "Development: national, regional and international machinery for the effective integration of women in the development process, including non-governmental organizations" - she said her Government wished to reaffirm its position that the full and effective participation of women, including their participation in the decision-making process at all levels, was a sine qua non for development and that the United Nations should take a leading role in strengthening national machineries to enable women to participate in the mainstream of development.

42. With regard to the third item - "Peace: refugee and displaced women and children" - she said her Government took the view that solutions should be sought in two directions: first, the provision of immediate relief to refugees and displaced women and their families at the international level, and, at national and international levels, the adoption of measures in support of those women. Secondly, a longer-term solution to the problem should be sought in the identification of ways to enable women and their families to remain in or return to their country of origin and to live there safely. That solution included the continuation of support programmes even after the return of the women to their countries.

43. The scope for co-operation between the United Nations and its Member States in connection with each of those topics was broad, and there was still a great need for assistance in such areas as information, training and advisory services. Close co-operation between Governments and international bodies and between non-governmental organizations and international bodies was essential for the successful implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. The model of co-operation practised in Austria involved three levels of exchange, including exchange between the national machinery for the advancement of women and representatives of the United Nations system, then the inclusion of politicians in the exchange process in order to ensure political support and finally the creation of a broad base for implementation by involving non-governmental organizations.

44. With regard to the interaction between national and international institutions in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, she said that the programmes of work of all international institutions and bodies should reflect commitment to full inclusion of women's issues in all the activities undertaken. She strongly reiterated her Government's view that all programmes and activities planned for the United Nations Year of the Family should be in accordance with the concept of equality between women and men as defined in the Forward-looking Strategies and in the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

45. With regard to women employed in the United Nations system, she said the principle of temporary positive discrimination in favour of women, particularly at decision-making levels, should be applied throughout the system. Regarding the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, she said that if it was to carry out its mandate effectively, it would be advisable for its members to be independent experts rather than holders of government offices. Her Government

(Mrs. Petritsch-Holaday, Austria)

welcomed the activities carried out by the Secretariat to support Member States in applying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and felt that the importance of the Convention justified the granting of highest priority to measures to strenghten the Committee's capacity to carry out its work and that a comprehensive review should be conducted of the resources available. In the light of the importance of co-operation to the international community, she called for the formulation of a broadly based, co-ordinated information strategy within the United Nations system to give wider circulation to issues relating to international co-operation, especially with regard to the advancement of women.

46. In view of the importance of increasing the participation of women in the political decision-making process, her delegation welcomed the convening of an interregional consultation on women in public life in September 1991. Its purpose should be to examine ways of encouraging women to translate their concern for issues at local and global level into effective political participation. The Government of Austria had made a special financial allocation to ensure that women from least developed countries participated in the consultation. It also welcomed the recommendation contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 with regard to the convening in 1995 of a world conference for the advancement of women, which it had offered to host at Vienna.

47. Mr. KONKOBO (Burkina Faso) said that in the 10 years since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the international community had become increasingly aware of the vital role of women in society. Although great progress had been made in terms of the recognition of the equality of women under law, certain attitudes still existed which kept women from realizing their full potential. As of 2 February 1990, only 100 States had become a party to the Convention and adherence to it needed to be reflected in deeds. Often, women were left behind by progress and their access to modern technological know-how was limited. It was still not a rarity to hear the view that only the training of men paid off. In addition, women were still subjected to mutilation and disfigurement. If that was true in free societies, the situation was still worse in areas where genocide or extreme violence was a way of life.

48. Under *apartheid*, black women had to be separated from their spouses and children in order to find employment in jobs of the meanest sort; nevertheless, women had played a significant role in the struggle to liberate Namibia and were in the forefront of the struggle still being waged in South Africa. He reiterated his country's support of all women who were fighting against the socio-cultural values of domination, exploitation and obscurantism. The Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 provided a basis for all action to further the advancement of women. His country was committed to the abolition of all practices which relegated individuals or social categories - and women in particular - to the margins of society. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it had taken measures to restore to women their political, legal, social, educational, labour and other rights. In Burkina Faso, economic emancipation was regarded as essential for the

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(Mr. Konkobo, Burkina Faso)

liberation of women, and it had therefore been decided to create a bank to ensure their economic advancement and to give them access to credit.

49. With regard to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38), his delegation welcomed General Recommendations Nos. 14 and 15, which dealt, respectively, with female circumcision and the avoidance of discrimination against women in national strategies for the prevention and control of AIDS. His Government had established a national committee to pursue the struggle to eliminate female circumcision. In order to achieve the true liberation of women, his Government believed that it was necessary to create in them the will to work alongside men in ensuring their country's future, the final objective being to build a society in which men and women were free of any form of domination or exploitation.

50. Mrs. EKONG (Nigeria) said Nigeria attached great importance to questions relating to the elimination of discrimination against women and the enhancement of women's status. It had participated at the third Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs, held at Ottawa, Canada, for the purpose of considering strategies for the advancement of women. It had been obvious to all the participants at that meeting that, although much had been achieved, problems and obstacles still abounded and threatened to outweigh the progress made.

51. The 1980s had been a "lost" decade in the developing countries, in which women and children, in particular, had been the victims of difficult economic and social conditions as reflected in higher maternal mortality rates and shorter life expectancy. The 1990 World Development Report noted that in many developing countries pregnancy and childbirth accounted for over 25 per cent of all deaths of women of child-bearing age. Every year 500,000 women died in childbirth, and 99 per cent of those deaths occurred in the developing world. Other statistics indicated that, five years after the adoption of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, women, who constituted half of the world's population and contributed two thirds of the hours worked, were inadequately and unequally rewarded by comparison with their male counterparts. Although as mothers, women were the primary agents of socialization, they constituted the most illiterate segment of the world's population. Such lack of progress had been underscored by the Commission on the Status of Women in its five-year review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies.

52. Her delegation had read with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies (A/45/489) and agreed with the priority themes to be discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session in 1991. It was glad to note that strengthening national machinery was among those priorities and that the most recent Directory of National Machinery published by the Division for the Advancement of Women at Vienna included information on 91 countries and annexed data on another 37 countries. That represented a marked improvement over the 1988 Directory. Her delegation commended the division on the work it had done and urged it to continue to update the Directory periodically.

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53. In Nigeria, the institutionalization and strengthening of national machinery for the advancement of women and the creation of new machinery was a priority. In addition to its Unit for Women's Affairs, the Government had recently established a National Commission on Women, which in 1989 had inaugurated the Better Life Programme for the Rural Population now institutionalized in the Women's Resource Centre. Those activities were intended to boost the quality of life of women in general and rural women in particular, consistent with the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies. Another activity which her Government had engaged in in connection with the advancement of women was the sponsoring of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in Development, held in conjunction with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

54. The objective of national machineries was to promote the advancement of women by ensuring that information was mobilized, channelled to decision makers and incorporated into national policies and programmes. Recent seminars on the roles, objectives and functions of national machineries had been held at the headquarters of the United Nations Office at Vienna, but her delegation felt that the subject was so crucial that meetings should not be restricted to Vienna and should be regionalized for greater positive effect. Nigeria had been party to the recommendations and conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women following its first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. The recommendations had been adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/15, and her delegation wished to reaffirm its commitment to them.

55. With regard to the theme of women and development to be considered by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session, she said that economic development and progress would be limited or impossible unless the female labour force was mobilized and used. Women in developing countries had been adversely affected by the debt crisis and the negative transfer of resources which resulted from it; inequitable terms of trade; falling commodity prices; and unequal patterns of income distribution. If the status of women was to be significantly enhanced, the debt crisis and the structural inequities of the international system would have to be resolved.

56. Her delegation supported and welcomed the recommendation for the convening of a world conference of women in 1995 to conduct the second review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and to ensure that their objectives were achieved at the international, regional and national levels.

57. With regard to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38), she expressed satisfaction at the way in which the members of the Committee had pursued their tasks and delight that 103 Member States had ratified or acceded to the Convention. Her delegation endorsed the two general recommendations contained in paragraph 438 of the report and pledged its continuing support for the work of the Committee. It also commended the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for their hard work

(Mrs. Ekong, Nigeria)

aimed at improving the lives of women in the developing countries. She called for a more rigorous application of the Nairobi strategies and urged the international community to unite in support of the achievement of gender equality which, together with the integration of women in development, should be a common goal for the 1990s.

58. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat was a matter of long-standing concern to those three Governments. The United Nations should set an example in the area of women's equality, since the first Article of its Charter had identified that equality as a basic human right. The equal participation of women in the Secretariat was also necessary to achieve the Charter's stipulated goal of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. The talents of women were being under-utilized, since women comprised only about 30 per cent of the Professional staff, and substantially less at the senior levels. If women were not included among the Organization's decision makers, both the needs of women and their potential to contribute would tend to be neglected or ignored.

59. Although some progress had been made on the issue, the process had been frustratingly slow. Women had hardly been mentioned in the Secretary-General's 1990 report to the Organization. The advancement of women in the Secretariat, as one of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, was currently under review and appraisal by the Committee.

60. According to document A/45/548, women currently constituted 28.3 per cent of the total Professional staff, which was an improvement over the 26.9 per cent figure of the previous year. However, the level of representation had been increasing at less than 1 per cent per year for the previous 10 years. At that rate, the proportion of women would not approximate 50 per cent until the year 2012. In addition, the progress had been mainly in the lower and middle levels. There were still only two women Under-Secretaries-General, and no women Assistant Secretaries-General. Women were therefore poorly represented at the levels where the Organization was most visible and where many of the important decisions were taken. While the administrative structures of the Organization must be changed to remove barriers to women's advancement, Member States had the responsibility of putting forward more women candidates for high-level posts.

61. The current five-year programme for improving the status of women in the Secretariat would expire at the end of 1990. A target of 35 per cent had been set for the end of the next five-year programme in 1995. However, the failure to reach the current year's target of 30 per cent demonstrated that, if the Organization did no more than maintain existing measures, the 1995 target would not be realized. Substantial structural and attitudinal changes were needed. Resources should be earmarked for the establishment of a separate unit for the advancement of women, to which all of the departments of the United Nations would be accountable at all levels. The degree of success in fulfilling mandates regarding the status of women should be one of the criteria by which each department's performance was evaluated.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

62. Although statistics and recommendations had been set forth at regular intervals, the reasons for the situation and the nature of the impediments to women's advancement in the international civil service had not been examined. The situation of the women in the Secretariat was shared by women in civil services and international organizations throughout the world. It was time to undertake a comprehensive, analytical study to determine exactly what barriers existed to the equal participation of women at all levels of the Secretariat. The results of such a study would enable the Secretariat to develop truly viable strategies to correct the situation.

63. The first five-year programme had established comprehensive and detailed strategies. For the forthcoming five-year programme, however, document A/45/548 merely suggested the continuation of existing recommendations and of the emergency measures implemented in 1990. Those existing recommendations were not set forth in sufficient detail. Moreover, the use of the term "emergency measures" suggested an extraordinary, short-term strategy, whereas a long-term, systematic approach was necessary to achieve genuine and lasting structural and attitudinal change. The Secretariat should consider proposals from delegations, based on their national experience, in formulating its strategies.

## AGENDA ITEM 88: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO THE RACIST AND COLONIALIST REGIME OF SOUTH AFRICA (A/C.3/45/L.4) (continued)

## AGENDA ITEM 91: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/C.3/45/L.7, L.8 and L.11) (continued)

## AGENDA ITEM 98: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/C.3/45/L.5) (continued)

## AGENDA ITEM 103: IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (A/C.3/45/L.6, L.9 and L.10) (continued)

### Draft resolutions A/C.3/45/L.4, L.5 and L.6

64. Miss MANSARAY (Sierra Leone), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that draft resolutions A/C.3/45/L.4, L.5 and L.6 (on agenda items 88, 98 and 103 respectively) sought to eradicate racism and colonialism, as conditions that stifled progress. Although the members of the Third Committee had not always agreed on the methods of combating those two evils, their shared vision of justice and progress had sustained their commitment to the cause.

65. Recent developments in southern Africa, particularly the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and the independence of Namibia, represented very significant progress. However, the racist régime of South Africa continued to receive political, military and other forms of assistance that enabled it to deprive the

(Miss Mansaray, Sierra Leone)

large majority of South Africans of the enjoyment of basic human rights. That problem was addressed by draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.4.

66. Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.5 pointed out that, by dedicating two consecutive decades to combating racism and racial discrimination, the international community had unequivocally signalled its determination to eradicate that scourge. However, the results of its efforts after the first decade had been less than gratifying. The draft resolution, inter alia, called on the United Nations, individual Governments and non-governmental organizations to redouble their efforts in that regard.

67. Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.6 expressed regret that there still existed régimes which sought to deny people their basic human right to self-determination. It called for greater determination by the international community to rectify such situations. Her delegation hoped that the three draft resolutions would be adopted unanimously by the Committee.

## Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.7

68. Mrs. ILIC (Yugoslavia) introduced, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.7 on the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and said that Ecuador should be added to the list of sponsors. She outlined the terms of the resolution, and indicated that operative paragraphs 7 and 8, concerning future efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the financial situation of the Committee, were the result of consultations with numerous delegations. All of the sponsoring delegations hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

## Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.8

69. Miss FOSTIER (Belgium), after recalling that her delegation had introduced a draft resolution on the subject of agenda item 91 every two years, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.8 on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. She said that Ecuador and Botswana had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, and pointed out that Belgium had been omitted from the list of sponsors.

70. To date, 130 countries had become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which meant that the Convention had more States parties than any other international legal instrument in the area of human rights. The text of the draft resolution corresponded to General Assembly resolution 43/95, which had been adopted without a vote. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by the Committee without a vote, as in the past.

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Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.11

71. Miss FUNDAFUNDA (Zambia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.11 on the status of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of *Apartheid*. The sponsors of the draft resolution were Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Universal acceptance of the Convention would contribute significantly to the struggle against the crime of *apartheid*. The draft resolution therefore sought to encourage Member States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention, in particular those States that had jurisdiction over transnational corporations operating in South Africa. The sponsors hoped that the Committee would support the draft resolution, as it had in previous years.

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.9

72. Miss JUNEJO (Pakistan) introduced, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.9 on agenda item 103 and said that Chile and Botswana should be added to the list of sponsors. The text of the draft resolution was nearly identical to that of General Assembly resolution 44/80, which had been adopted without a vote. The draft resolution had merely been updated to include references to the latest resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights. It addressed the problem of the growing incidence of military intervention, aggression and occupation of sovereign nations, by which millions of people had been uprooted and forced to become refugees. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote by both the Third Committee and the plenary, as in previous years.

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.10

73. Mrs. GARUBA (Nigeria) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.10 on the use of mercenaries as a means to violate human rights and to impede the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. She said that Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Maldives, Senegal and Viet Nam had joined the list of sponsors. The report of the Special Rapporteur on mercenaries (A/45/488) indicated that mercenary activities were still taking their toll on innocent victims in more than one area of the African continent. In the draft resolution, the removal of Central America from the list of areas in which mercenaries were active demonstrated the effectiveness of detailed reporting by the Special Rapporteur on mercenary activities. Her delegation hoped that the text of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries would be incorporated into the national legislation of individual countries. She reiterated the appeal contained in operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, urging States to not only sign, but also to ratify and accede to that Convention.

Revisions to draft resolutions A/C.3/45/L.4 and L.6

74. Miss MANSARAY (Sierra Leone) said that the end of paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.4 should be revised as follows:

> "... in the light of any recommendations which the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council, and the United Nations Special Committee against *Apartheid* may wish to submit to it;".

75. The end of the seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.6 should be revised as follows:

> "... as well as the report of the Monitoring Group of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Southern Africa of the Organization of African Unity, 4/ and the United Nations Declaration on *Apartheid* and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the United Nations on 14 December 1989,".

76. Paragraph 13 of draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.6 should be revised as follows:

> "*Strongly urges* the *apartheid* régime to respond positively to the provisions of the Declaration of the Organization of African Unity *Ad Hoc* Committee on Southern Africa on the question of South Africa, adopted at Harare on 21 August 1989, and the United Nations Declaration on *Apartheid* and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the United Nations on 14 December 1989, by releasing unconditionally ...".

*The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.*

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE
19th meeting
held on
Thursday, 25 October 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

# SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

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AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (*continued*)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (*continued*)

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A/C.3/45/SR.19
2 November 1990

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (*continued*) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B; A/45/38, A/45/202, A/45/222, A/45/225, A/45/230, A/45/254, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/269, A/45/270, A/45/426; A/C.3/45/5)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (*continued*) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B; A/45/347, A/45/489, A/45/548; A/C.3/45/5)

1. Ms. LAURENT (Observer for the European Community) said that the Community's second action programme on equal opportunities for women had made considerable progress, particularly in the field of law. Five directives had been adopted on equal treatment, equal pay and social security in order to promote statutory rights and obligations in the member States. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value was applied throughout the Community. As a result of a growing awareness of the need to combat sexual harassment, a code of good conduct was being drawn up to protect the dignity of women and men at work. A number of measures, including the holding of seminars, workshops and conferences, had been undertaken to raise awareness of equal opportunities.

2. Faced with the establishment of the Community's internal market and the need to improve the competitiveness of its economy, Europe required a qualified labour force and the contribution of women would be a decisive factor. There were still many barriers to women's participation on equal terms with men in work and society and women were still employed mainly in low-skilled and unstable jobs. Improving the integration of women into the labour market was an essential part of the strategy for Europe's economic and social cohesion. The Community's third action programme would mark a new stage in the policy to ensure equal opportunities by proposing a more comprehensive strategy aimed at promoting full participation by women in the labour market and the decision-making process.

3. The Committee had recently adopted an innovative programme to promote vocational training and employment for women to help them overcome the specific structural difficulties which they encountered in the labour market and share the benefits resulting from the establishment of the single market in 1992.

4. More deliberate and sustained efforts were needed to integrate women fully into development. Priority should be given to improving women's productivity and income-earning potential in order to enable them to improve their living standards and contribute more to economic performance. In its development co-operation, the Community, therefore, concentrated on assisting large numbers of low-income women at an affordable cost, thereby contributing to other development objectives. The focus was on integrating women into regular development programmes, rather than designing programmes for women only.

5. The extensive integration of women's different roles into development under the Fourth ACP-EEC Convention was an excellent point of departure for future action.

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(Ms. Laurent)

Under the Convention, the Community supported the efforts of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to enhance the status of women, improve their living conditions, expand their economic and social role and promote their full participation in the production and development process on equal terms with men. Particular attention was also paid to the crucial role played by women in family health, nutrition and hygiene. The Convention identified areas in which gender-specific constraints hindered women's participation, particularly legal constraints and those resulting from a lack of information.

6. Mrs. McLENNAN (United States of America) said that her country had high regard for the work of the United Nations in the era of renewed promise for international co-operation and multilateral diplomacy. In July 1990, President Bush had signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act, the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. The Act provided basic guarantees for men and women with disabilities giving them the independence and freedom of choice necessary to control their lives. Her Government was concerned about the question of female-headed households, the number of which was increasing all over the world; it had instituted programmes to assist such households in meeting their economic, nutritional and social needs.

7. The Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor, established 70 years earlier, sought to meet the diverse needs of the rapidly growing female labour force in the United States, which contributed immensely to the health of the nation's economy. In 1973, the United States Foreign Assistance Act had been amended to ensure that bilateral development assistance programmes gave particular attention to activities that integrated women into the national economies of their countries, thus improving their status and assisting the overall development effort.

8. One of the primary goals of the Women in Development Offices of the United States Agency for International Development and the Peace Corps was to increase the benefits derived by women from participation in their countries' economic activities. Her Government sought to enable women to participate in their own economic development by ensuring that they had the necessary tools, skills and resources. Non-governmental organizations had been of immeasurable assistance in advancing the status of women. She commended the efforts of UNIFEM to promote environmentally sustainable development and its increased involvement in a comprehensive programme of support for women entrepreneurs. UNIFEM could play a unique role in showing how increased access by women to financing sources, technology and related services could promote private sector development.

9. Refugee women and children accounted for approximately 80 per cent of the 15 million refugees in the world. The international community must ensure not only their survival, but also their well-being. Her Government encouraged all relevant United Nations agencies to cover the entire range of refugee needs and urged implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council, calling for increased efforts to respond to the needs of refugee women. She supported the call for a system-wide review to assess the experience and capacity of various organizations in that regard.

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(Mrs. McLennan, United States)

10. Human rights abuses against women were rampant, violent and dehumanizing. At the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United States had been pleased to support three resolutions aimed at encouraging Governments to establish and enforce penalties for violence and abuse against women. Her Government fully endorsed all measures, including those taken within the United Nations, to put an end to acts of physical violence and abuse against women.

11. Her delegation fully supported the holding of a world conference on women in 1995 and welcomed the generous offer of Austria to host the conference. General Assembly resolution 44/77 endorsed the convening of a high-level interregional consultation on women in public life. That consultation should be seen as part of the preparations for the 1995 conference and should include senior women in Government, political parties, unions, and non-governmental organizations.

12. Her Government reaffirmed its commitment to increasing the participation of women in the work of the United Nations. The report by the Secretary-General on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) indicated that, although there had been a slight overall increase in the number of women, there had been a decrease at the most senior levels. There did not seem to be a genuine high-level commitment to fulfilling the current five-year programme for improving the status of women in the Secretariat. Her Government supported the suggestion by New Zealand that a comprehensive, analytical study should be carried out to determine the barriers to equal participation by women at all levels of the Secretariat. The Secretariat must make a commitment at the highest level and within existing resources to institute practical measures to implement the principles and recommendations already approved. Those responsible for implementing such measures must have the authority and accountability to ensure their success. Her delegation planned to introduce a resolution on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat and urged Member States to support the Organization's efforts to increase the percentage of women in Professional and decision-making positions by nominating more women candidates, identifying and encouraging women to apply for vacant posts, and drawing up national rosters of women candidates to be shared with the Secretariat. Joint efforts were needed to create a framework for the advancement of women and bring about attitudinal changes to obtain the necessary commitment at a time when democratic values were becoming the common objective of all peoples.

13. Ms. COLLINS (Canada) said that 1990 marked the twentieth anniversary of the report of the Canadian Royal Commission on the Status of Women, a milestone on the path to equality for Canadian women. Canada accorded high priority to the advancement of women and earlier in the month had been honoured to host the third meeting of Commonwealth ministers responsible for women's affairs, attended by 47 countries. All participants had agreed that the equality of women was essential for the economic well-being of nations, and that to deny them equality was to waste opportunity, limit freedom and impair prospects for the future. The conference had considered progress made in implementing the Commonwealth plan of action on women and development adopted in Harare in 1987, had examined issues relating to women

(Ms. Collins, Canada)

and population, and had agreed to work towards integrating women's concerns in the preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

14. In conjunction with the Commonwealth meeting, a number of delegates had participated in a workshop on reporting requirements under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had now been ratified by 104 countries. Canada's second report under the Convention had been reviewed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) earlier in the year and preparation of the third report was well under way. Those events, together with the various communications activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, had increased awareness of the Convention among Governments and non-governmental organizations. The reporting process had provided a further opportunity to review the implementation measures taken and their effectiveness.

15. The Canadian delegation had welcomed the constructive nature of the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in Vienna earlier in the year. The agenda had included the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Commission had adopted a draft resolution containing a set of recommendations to guide implementation in the coming years. Canada strongly recommended that the carefully considered wording of the draft resolution, subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council as resolution 1990/15, should be adopted by the General Assembly.

16. Canada supported the Commission's recommendation that a fourth world conference on women should be held in 1995, which would help to renew the momentum of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, since progress towards women's advancement was slowing down and in some cases even showing signs of reversal. It was time now to begin looking at mechanisms to ensure that Member States had the ability to prepare comprehensive evaluation reports by 1995. Canada published regular fact sheets, which were useful in monitoring progress. That was no easy task, and consideration should already be being given to the kind of technical support needed to ensure a high rate of participation in the preparation of future implementation reports. It was important that preoccupation with the world conference should not overshadow substantive work on women's issues in the coming five years. Canada hoped that the costs of the conference would be reflected in the regular budgetary cycles of the agencies concerned.

17. She had noted with satisfaction the attention given to women at the recent World Summit for Children. The Declaration and Plan of Action recognized that the improvement of all aspects of the well-being of children depended largely on women having control over their own lives, which was essential to the family planning and child-spacing so desperately needed to improve the health of children and to arrest unsustainable rates of population growth. Her Government urged all Member States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to implement the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

(Ms. Collins, Canada)

18. With regard to the priority themes to be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session, Canada welcomed the emphasis on the "vulnerable" women, for whom equal opportunity was a means of advancement, and stressed the importance of the needs of single women who were heads of households. Canada welcomed particularly the recent seminar on disabled women in Vienna, the first United Nations meeting to consider specifically the problems of those women and their contribution to development.

19. She welcomed the emphasis that the Commission on the Status of Women had placed on the strengthening of national machinery as a major instrument in improving implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Canada had participated in a number of bilateral missions for strengthening national machinery in developing countries and the Canadian International Development Agency had recently organized a technical workshop attended by national machinery authorities from 47 Commonwealth countries.

20. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was playing an important part in strengthening the work of national machinery for women and placing women on the agenda of the mainstream development programmes and policies of Governments and private, public and international institutions. Its experience in recent years contributed to a growing body of evidence that expert resources earmarked for women made a significant difference. Canada strongly supported the Fund's work and looked forward to the mobilization of additional resources from new sources.

21. In connection with the peace theme for 1991, it was disturbing to see that on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the situation of women refugees remained critical. In 1988, Canada had pioneered the "women at risk" programme, which provided for the resettlement of refugee women in particularly difficult circumstances, whose lack of education and employment opportunities in their countries of origin prevented them from settling in Canada. A second programme, the language and orientation initiative, launched in the current year, helped to prepare immigrants and refugees, particularly women, to play a full part in Canadian society.

22. Canada attached great importance to the objectives of the International Literacy Year. The national literacy programme had funded numerous literacy initiatives across the country, several of which met the particular needs and interests of women, and the Canadian International Development Agency was funding a number of literacy projects in developing countries, many of them directed specifically towards women. Two-thirds of people unable to read and write were women. It was essential to maintain the momentum created by the International Literacy Year and to recognize the importance of women's literacy to international development. One year of education for a mother could be equated to a 9 per cent reduction in the mortality of children under five. Canada would be introducing a resolution on women and literacy based on resolution 34/8 of the Commission on the Status of Women and, among other things, requesting the Secretary-General to

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(Ms. Collins, Canada)

prepare a report for submission to the 1995 conference, on progress towards increasing female literacy.

23. In connection with World AIDS Day to be held on 1 December 1990, her Government noted the importance of the recent expert meeting on women and AIDS organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women in Vienna and its conclusion that it was only through a dynamic partnership between the United Nations system, national machinery and Governments, and non-governmental organizations that the status of women could be improved and the impact of AIDS reduced.

24. Her delegation noted with appreciation the Secretary-General's most recent report on the status of women in the Secretariat but regretted that the target for women to occupy 30 per cent of United Nations posts subject to geographical distribution by the end of the current year would not be met. She reaffirmed Canada's support for the target of 35 per cent of women in the Secretariat by 1995, and the maintenance of the special emergency measures recently adopted by the Secretariat to improve women's representation. The New Zealand representative, in a statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand the previous day, had noted that despite frequent statistical reports, there had as yet been no in-depth analysis of the barriers to women's advancement in the United Nations system. The time had come to take a close look at exactly what impediments existed to women's advancement in the international civil service.

25. A recent study by a special task force in her country, entitled "Beneath the Veneer" had identified attitudes perpetuating sexist stereotypes, a corporate culture that was unwelcoming to women, and the difficulty women had in balancing work and family responsibilities as major obstacles to women's advancement. Women in the United Nations Secretariat were not alone in the problems they faced: their situation was shared by women throughout the world in public services - including Canada - and in international organizations. It was time to move beyond mere numerical reporting towards a comprehensive, analytical study to determine exactly what barriers existed to the equal participation of women at all levels - especially the most senior levels - of the Secretariat. The results would enable the Secretariat to develop really viable strategies for achieving full equality for women throughout the United Nations system. The Canadian Government attached the greatest importance to a dynamic partnership between Governments and non-governmental organizations in the continuing quest for global equality for women.

26. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that his country firmly believed that women's advancement was a key element in its social development. The United Nations deserved high praise for its role in promoting the rights and the general advancement of women throughout the world. The Commission on the Status of Women was also to be specially commended. It had devoted much of its work to ensuring equality of rights for men and women alike. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to both of which Thailand was a State party, were milestones of which the Commission should be justifiably proud. At its thirty-fourth session

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(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

earlier in the year, the Commission had made a number of useful recommendations which gave further impetus to the full implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. His country whole-heartedly supported the Commission's call for the convening of a world conference on women in 1995 and was ready to take an active part in ensuring proper preparations for what would be a landmark international conference.

27. With regard to the question of the environment, its degradation, its future and how to save it, all people - and half of all people were women - were responsible for preserving the environment. His delegation was delighted that the role of women specifically in relation to the environment was currently on the agenda of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). Thailand would support the Institute's examination of that issue, particularly since one of its nationals, the researcher and social scientist Dr. Amara Pongsapich, was serving on the Board of Trustees.

28. Thailand welcomed the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and particularly the extensive participation of women from all regions. The Fund had given generous support for more than 10 development projects in Thailand, which directly benefited women and their communities, and was helping the Thai Government to devise national development plans which would increasingly respond to women's needs. He wished to place on record his delegation's appreciation of the Fund's good work in Thailand and all over the world.

29. The advancement of women was not a new concept for Thailand, where women had always played an active role in social and economic development and were respected as leaders of the community in all areas of endeavour. Items relating to women were high on the list of priorities in the Thai National Economic and Social Development Plans. A long-term plan for women covering 20 years, from 1982 to 2001, was being actively implemented, many of its guidelines being adapted from those devised for the Nairobi Strategies.

30. The Thai National Commission on Women's Affairs, established in March 1989, was proving active. It had spearheaded efforts to revise the long-term women's development plan which placed emphasis on education and participation; it had helped to formulate provisions on women's development in the current Seventh National Development Plan; and it had been at the centre of efforts to strengthen laws and regulations concerning women. As a result of the Commission's work, he was pleased to state that some of Thailand's reservations in respect of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination against Women were in the process of being lifted.

31. Activities relating to women were also being carried out elsewhere in South-East Asia. The six members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) worked closely together on women's development and other issues relating to the status and welfare of women in their respective countries. The ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organizations (ACWO), established in 1981, served as a focal point for developing and co-ordinating projects to promote the rights of

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

women in the entire ASEAN region. In February, the Fourth General Assembly of ACWO had produced several good initiatives for the promotion of women's rights, in particular a programme on vocational training for women proposed by Thailand.

32. Mrs. WIJENBORG-POT (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands would shortly be ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and was a member of the Commission on the Status of Women. In reviewing the impact of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the questions to be answered were whether activities were moving in the right direction and how efforts could be improved. Member States, the Secretariat, the various United Nations organizations and particularly the Commission on the Status of Women, had been working to implement the Forward-looking Strategies for five years, but it had to be said that the results were discouraging and the machinery of progress was not running smoothly. All the evidence showed that women were still in an inferior position throughout the world and their level of participation in all aspects of public life was disturbingly low. Without a change of policy, the goal set in Nairobi of achieving equality between men and women by the year 2000 would not be attained. The United Nations must take decisions to give fresh impetus to the advancement of women. In the light of experience at past conferences, it was clear that the knowledge and experience of women in all walks of life and from all parts of the world must be brought to bear in the preparations for the world conference on women to be held in 1995, and it was important to ensure that enough time and space were allowed at the conference for mutual contacts and the exchange of ideas. The participation of women from developing countries should be promoted by travel grants.

33. In discussing the review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the Commission on the Status of Women had made 24 recommendations, one of which proposed that more attention should be given to the problem of women and AIDS and that the theme should be embodied in the programmes of the World Health Organization. That recommendation was particularly important in view of the recently reported increase in the number of women and children contracting AIDS and the social isolation which often accompanied the disease. She urged the General Assembly to adopt those recommendations in order to determine the lines on which women's advancement should be promoted in the future.

34. Until enough women were involved in decision-making their interests would not be protected. Women must therefore be informed of their political rights, and structural changes should be made to encourage their participation. Data must be gathered to determine quota levels with a view to promoting the affirmative action that would ultimately increase the number of women in decision-making. Women in decision-making positions should also maintain contact with each other on an international level.

35. Women were taking a more active role in development despite the negative impact on them of structural adjustment in many countries. They must be encouraged to increase that role even further, and she welcomed the joint efforts of UNIFEM and UNDP in formulating innovative projects to promote that goal. On a critical

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note, however, she said that the proportion of women employed by UNDP at the P-5 level and above was currently 15 per cent, and that was too small if the policy on women and development was to be properly implemented.

36. In connection with the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, she noted that democratization in Central and Eastern Europe had resulted in a reduced proportion of women in political office and in economic restructuring programmes in which women had no great role to play. That was a matter requiring special attention.

37. With women still often subjected to acts of violence, an improved and transparent communications procedure was required and her delegation was pleased that the present inadequate one was under review. Efforts must also be made to understand the special problems of the increasing number of impoverished women in order to devise better policy measures.

38. In accordance with the Forward-looking Strategies, the Secretary-General must make every effort to achieve the goal of 35 per cent women in the secretariat by 1995 and the chief executives and managing directors of the Organization must be encouraged to appoint more women to higher-level positions. The classification of secretarial personnel to give proper weight to the skills involved had still not been carried out and she urged that that be done.

39. Lastly, she said that women's networks had proved their value as new policy instruments, and that meant that the United Nations must further encourage women's co-operation at the international level so as to expedite the achievement of true equality between men and women throughout the world.

40. Ms. DU Yong (China) said that women had an important role to play in economic and social development and that the United Nations must make greater efforts to ensure implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, with particular emphasis on enhancing the status of women and promoting equality by increasing their participation in development, combating illiteracy and giving them a greater role in political decision-making.

41. The Chinese Government, as part of its recent policy of reform and greater openness, was increasing the role of women in economic and political life. Many professional women had emerged to contribute to the country's development and women were acquiring more knowledge and a greater sense of social responsibility. Still, equality with men had not been achieved. Feudal notions of male superiority persisted, and discrimination was not unknown in her country, where many women were still illiterate. Chinese women were none the less making every effort to remove those obstacles and achieve genuine equality.

42. Internationally, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was an important instrument for promoting equality between men and women and she appealed to those countries that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible. Her country greatly appreciated the

(Ms. Du Yong, China)

seriousness and impartiality with which the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the supervisory organ of the Convention, considered reports submitted by States parties.

43. Lastly, UNIFEM was to be commended for focusing on the needs of developing countries and providing assistance to their women. It had achieved impressive results with meagre resources and China would continue to co-operate with it so that it could make further contributions to the cause of women in developing countries.

44. Mrs. DJENEBOU-KABA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that among the benefits to be derived from improving the status of women and increasing their role in development was the attendant improvement in the welfare, survival and protection of the children of the world. The welfare of women and children required not only measures to improve the health of women but also to ensure their literacy. There was a direct correlation between illiteracy and infant mortality and the children of illiterate women were less likely to finish school. Illiterate women were also more likely to die in childbirth. Yet in many societies, girls suffered from educational neglect, undernourishment, overwork and forced marriages, and greater efforts were needed to correct those abuses and answer the needs of the vulnerable.

45. The education of women also had economic benefits because it enabled women to solve their own problems and contribute to the productive capacity of the country. Illiterate women had great potential that could be tapped only through education. She welcomed the efforts of UNIFEM to help the women of Western Africa. One of the main problems affecting African women, particularly in her own country, was access to credit and efforts must be made to provide it, particularly to rural women.

46. As long as women had no decision-making power, their interests would be neglected and she encouraged greater recruitment and promotion of women in the secretariats of international organizations. She deplored the fact that the number of African P-5s in the Secretariat was insignificant and that French-speaking Africans in particular were extremely rare at that level.

47. Lastly, each country must define its priorities in terms of its own particular situation and identify the needs of its women clearly so as to be able to remove the obstacles they encountered and deal with their problems patiently and thoroughly.

48. Ms. S'AAD (Egypt) said the current phase in history was so crucial that she felt compelled to refrain from addressing specific issues in order to deal with the general. While at the international level developments of both a positive and a negative nature had been taking place, within narrower boundaries, the international community had embarked on the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. She felt it would be opportune, while preparing for the world conference on women in 1995, to take stock of the significant changes occurring in the world. The most significant lesson to be drawn from recent events was the concept of

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(Ms. S'aad, Egypt)

interdependence - between men and women, between nations, between issues and between the three priority themes used to approach the question of the advancement of women - peace, equality and development.

49. As the body designated to undertake the preparatory work in connection with the world conference, the Commission on the Status of Women could build on the consensus achieved in major United Nations exercises such as the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the World Summit for Children. Consistent with the position on women taken in the Second and Third Committees, which she believed should work in concert on women's issues, she stressed the important contribution the Commission could make to the International Conference on Population to be held in 1994. She noted that in the first review of the Forward-looking Strategies, importance had been attached to the significance of technologies for development. The incorporation of appropriate technologies into the informal sector, where the majority of women in the developing countries were employed, was necessary for increasing production. Since technology was the determining factor in narrowing the gap between the developed and the developing countries, her delegation thought it would be appropriate to cover it under the priority theme relating to development. Finally, in response to recent integration initiatives throughout the world, her delegation felt that a regional dimension should be given to the development theme.

50. Mrs. ALVEAR (Chile) said that genuine democracy was inconceivable if half of a country's population - namely, women - did not participate fully in the democratic process. The themes identified as priorities by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women - equality, development and peace - made great sense to Chileans, all of whom, especially the women as the main transmitters of values within the family, were eager to play an active role in the development of their country.

51. Chile had ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimiation of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and regarded its ratification as a commitment to adopt appropriate measures in all spheres relating to women. The recommendation to create national agencies to deal with issues relating to women had been favourably received by the countries of Latin America. In the case of Chile, the full incorporation of women into national life was a priority in President Aylwin's programme, which was guided by the principles of the equality of men and women, the autonomy of women, the dignity of women and the need to protect and strengthen the family. The programme of action of the soon-to-be established National Woman's Service (SERNAM), which she would have the honour of heading with the rank of Minister of State, covered an enormous variety of situations relating to the incorporation of women into the political and socio-economic life of the country. Some idea of the magnitude of the task might be gleaned from the fact that women constituted 31 per cent of the labour force and 57 per cent of the total population of Chile. Moreover, their participation was bought at a high price owing to the dual role working women played as both mothers and workers. In the twentieth century, women were plagued by problems and guilt feelings when they ventured forth into society, and that was something which had to change.

(Mrs. Alvear, Chile)

52. Everybody agreed as to the importance of the family, but the first step in protecting it was to raise the status of women, many of whom had not completed their education and had no legal status or custody over their children. The responsibilities of the National Women's Service included the study and promotion of legal and administrative reforms; the promotion of measures to strengthen the family; and the maintenance of co-operation with national and international agencies dealing with issues relating to women. The Service would give priority to programmes concerning women heading households, the elimination of violence in families, the establishment of information and training centres for women, the prevention of teenage pregnancies and the promotion of legal reforms and communications.

53. There could be no democracy without participation or participation without information. Women were often relegated to the margins of society because the information they needed to participate in it, to assert their rights and to gain access to benefits provided by the State was not available to them. SERNAM planned to set up a network of centres throughout the country which would provide orientation and training designed to help women solve their problems. As for teenage pregnancies, she said that one out of every seven babies in Chile was born to a teenage mother and that 58.2 per cent of such babies were illegitimate. SERNAM intended to develop an integrated plan in that respect, which would provide for the prevention of teenage pregnancies and for support for teenagers who were already pregnant.

54. She thanked the internatioal community for its continuing support of Chile and stressed the importance of the integration of peoples and of world solidarity in the quest for peace, justice and development.

55. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey) said his delegation had noted with interest document A/45/347 on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). He commended the efforts made by the Fund in support of rural and poor women and said his Government would continue to contribute to it. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/45/489, he said that Turkey participated actively in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had found, at its thirty-fourth session, that obstacles still stood in the way of the advancement of women. As for the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548), he said that, although the proposal contained in the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 that the proportion of women in the Secretariat should be increased by 1 per cent each year after the target of 30 per cent had been reached might seem disappointing by comparison with what had been expected, it was nevertheless realistic.

56. Turkey was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which it regarded as one of the most important legal instruments in so far as true equality between the sexes was concerned. With regard to the Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38), he noted that the first report submitted by Turkey had been

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(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

examined by the Committee during its ninth session held from 22 January to 2 February 1990, at which his delegation had entered into a constructive dialogue with the Committee with useful and instructive results.

57. The gap between theory and practice in legislation designed to ensure equality between the sexes was still present, and, in addition, economic and social crises had a greater impact on women than on men. Turkey was making continuous efforts to secure the advancement of women and improve their status. Programmes were under way in an effort to end illiteracy among women and to provide them with continuing education. The access of girls and women to all levels of education and vocational training and the overcoming of obstacles to the participation of women in all areas of development, both as beneficiaries and as active agents, were among the main principles underlying the country's sixth five-year plan for the period 1990-1994.

58. Mrs. ILIC (Yugoslavia) said her delegation shared the view expressed by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 were pillars of United Nations efforts to achieve equality between women and men. It was therefore concerned that the Commission on the Status of Women had reached the conclusion at its thirty-fourth session that, although some progress continued to be made, a combination of economic and political factors had slowed down the rate of progress sufficiently to place the achievement of the objectives agreed upon at Nairobi at risk.

59. Relaxation of political tension had not been matched at the economic and social levels in many developing countries plagued by a heavy debt burden, high interest rates, low commodity prices and other adverse factors. The primary victims of current reductions in social spending were women and children, and urgent measures were needed at national, regional and international levels to rectify that situation. Close attention should be paid to the recommendations and conclusions emanating from the first review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies, which had been conducted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fourth session. In connection with one of the priority themes of that session - the participation of women - she said that from 15 to 19 October 1990 a seminar had been organized in Yugoslavia by the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development to discuss major issues and policy options with regard to increased participation of women in public management. Her delegation welcomed the recommendation to hold a world conference in 1990 at which the second review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies would be conducted.

60. Speaking as the representative of a non-aligned and developing country, she said Yugoslavia found it gratifying that the non-aligned countries were continuing to devote due attention to the question of the advancement of women and their integration into the development efforts of their countries both as beneficiaries and as active agents. A ministerial conference of non-aligned countries on the role of women in development had been held at Havana from 29 January to

1 February 1990, and it was hoped that a similar conference could be held prior to the world conference in 1995. Her delegation hoped that, when the documents for the world conference were prepared, better use would be made of existing data, such as those contained in country reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and of information gathered by INSTRAW and similar agencies. She also expressed the hope that the Secretariat would come to the conference with more encouraging results on the employment of women in the Secretariat than those presented in document A/45/548.

61. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that the number of ratifications of and accessions to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had risen to 104 and looked forward to other countries' becoming parties to it. Finally, she expressed regret that the General Assembly would not be considering the report of INSTRAW at its current session, particularly since 1990 was INSTRAW's tenth anniversary. The appreciation expressed by the Economic and Social Council for the work of INSTRAW in its resolution 1990/16 could hardly compensate for the absence of action on the part of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Friday, 26 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

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# SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

later: Ms. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe)

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AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (*continued*) (A/45/3, Chap. V, sect. B, A/45/38, A/45/426, A/45/202, A/45/222, A/45/225, A/45/230, A/45/254, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/269, A/45/270; A/C.3/45/5)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (*continued*) (A/45/3, Chap. V, sect. B, A/45/347, A/45/489, A/45/548; A/C.3/45/5)

1. Mrs. REGAZZOLI (Argentina) said that, one third of the way to their target date, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies were still encountering obstacles because of the deep-seated resistance to the advancement of women and the decline in the resources devoted to it as a result of the deterioration of the world economic situation at the end of the 1980s. That was why the implementation of the Strategies must be accelerated in the next 10 years. A setback would be very costly from the point of view of economic and social development, the utilization of human resources and the general progress of society.

2. Most countries had guaranteed equality of opportunity in their legislation, but *de facto* and *de jure* discrimination continued to exist, and Governments and non-governmental organizations must act at the political and economic level to eliminate it. One of the obstacles to the elimination of *de facto* discrimination was that most men and women were unaware of women's rights and did not really understand the legal and administrative machinery for implementing them. It was therefore necessary to give women some basic legal education, using traditional and other educational systems, in order to achieve tangible results by 1994.

3. Information must also be widely disseminated on the work of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women through media to which all women had easy access in order to make them aware of their rights. The national reports submitted to the Committee should also be disseminated in every country and analysed by governmental and non-governmental bodies to ensure that they reflected the national reality.

4. Her Government hoped that the United Nations, including the International Labour Office and UNESCO, would examine the achievements of countries in sensitizing the public to basic rights, in order to help Governments, non-governmental organizations and women's movements to carry out effective campaigns. In both intramural and extramural education, Governments should encourage the revision, in conformity with the legislation and practice of their countries, of all textbooks in order to eliminate sexist prejudices. They should also combat the stereotypes spread by the media.

5. Women had always constituted a large proportion of the active population, and that proportion was increasing continuously. However, their participation in the economy remained characterized by job, salary and career prospect inequalities and by their exclusion from economic decision-making.

(Mrs. Regazzoli, Argentina)

6. The 1980s had witnessed a net impoverishment of Latin America and the Caribbean. The region's gross product had declined by 10 per cent; that figure alone highlighted the growing inability of the Latin American Governments to meet even the elementary needs of women. Industrial backwardness, inflation, debt, the violation of human rights and adjustment plans had been the centre of attention, and it was clear that the region's economic decline was not a mere cyclical phenomenon. The developing world's financial, economic and social crisis had led to a growing deterioration in the situation of large parts of the population, in particular women, by widening the gap in income distribution and deepening unemployment, which affected women more than men. The adjustment plans had in fact led to a large decrease in social expenditures, particularly in the fields of education, health and housing.

7. It was well known that the social, economic and political mobility of women was a direct function of their educational level. It was not easy to carry out large-scale social programmes among rural and working women, handicapped women or mothers of large families.

8. Poor women who were heads of household or unmmarried were subject to twofold discrimination. Hundreds of thousands of them provided for their families by doing badly paid work without social protection of any kind.

9. As women could not enjoy equal rights or make progress against a background of war and tension, it was highly important for countries to live together in harmony. The international community must also eliminate drug trafficking, which further intensified the extreme poverty of women.

10. Another great problem for which no statistics were available was that of violence, including physical and psychological violence, harassment, sexual ill-treatment and incest, which were all a result of the imbalance of power between men and women and were reinforced by the commercialization of sexual relations, the most obvious manifestations of which were the traffic in women and prostitution. To those must be added the intolerable new violations of human rights constituted by the traffic in and sale of children from the poorest sectors of society. Governments could not remain indifferent to the appearance of so infamous a traffic.

11. The advancement of women also depended on their participation in important political decisions, including those relating to international security, the elimination of poverty and environmental protection.

12. Government bodies, women's associations and international organizations such as the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM, UNIDO and ILO should orient their research efforts towards the collection of data and their financial and technical support towards enlarging the possibilities for women to participate in economic, cultural and social policy and to become the driving force for development plans which would protect them from injustice and poverty

(Mrs. Regazzoli, Argentina)

13. Her delegation welcomed the proposal by Austria concerning the holding of a world conference on women in 1995 (A/C.3/45/5).

14. Mr. PULZ (Czechoslovakia) agreed with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna that the advancement of women was an essential element of economic and social progress and that the United Nations could not fulfil its mission without giving it attention.

15. His delegation shared the evaluation of the progress made and the remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies made by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fourth session and supported the recommendations and conclusions of the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Strategies approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/15, as well as resolution 1990/12, in which the Council had recommended that a world conference on women be held in 1995. The conference should provide an opportunity for a high-level analysis of the implementation of the Strategies and to give new impetus to the advancement of women and the mobilization of international public opinion for that purpose. His delegation welcomed the offer made by the Government of Austria (A/C.3/45/5) for the holding of the conference at Vienna. It had hoped to contribute to the conference's success and was considering the possibility of arranging a preparatory European regional meeting in 1994.

16. Another significant international event directly relating to the status of women would be the International Year of the Family. The Year would make it possible to focus attention on equality of men and women in the family and the division of responsibility, as well as the participation of married women and mothers in economic and social life.

17. His delegation was glad that the advancement of women had been one of the priorities in the preparation of the International Development Strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade. It shared the conclusions adopted in that regard by the Economic and Social Council (resolution 1990/10 and decision 1990/215).

18. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 (A/45/226) and on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) showed that additional efforts would be required to increase the percentage of women in the Secretariat to the desired level. His delegation had supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/3 to that end.

19. With regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, an important legal instrument, the United Nations and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were playing an important role in ensuring that more countries acceded to it and put its contents into practice. His delegation had followed the work of the Committee's ninth session with interest and supported its conclusions (A/45/38), including the two general recommendations, No. 14 and No. 15. It welcomed the decision to discuss

(Mr. Pulz, Czechoslovakia)

the implementation of various articles of the Convention. Czechoslovakia had submitted its second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention and intended, when the report was considered, to supply new information reflecting the political and economic changes which had recently occurred in Czechoslovakia and which had resulted in a more open and consistent approach to implementation of the Convention.

20. His Government was currently studying new means of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women on the basis of the Strategies, the work of the United Nations and the principle that the State bore responsibility for resolving the basic issues relating to the status of women. It was also endeavouring to resolve a number of problems inherited from the past, including poor representation of women in senior posts in elected organs, administration and management and the economy, the fact that the average salary of women was one third lower than that of men, and the barriers to the enjoyment of leisure time by women.

21. Mrs. KARMACHARYA (Nepal), the Secretary-General of the Nepal Women's Association, said that she had worked all her life for the restoration of democracy, respect for human rights and the advancement of women in her country. After centuries of discrimination and humiliation, women could now look forward to the advent of a new era in which their active participation, on a basis of equality with men, would be universally recognized. Yet while wide-ranging responsibilities were now assumed by women in developed societies, that was not the case in developing countries. In Nepal strongly held traditional prejudices against women persisted. Girls, looked upon as liabilities at birth, were deprived of proper education and condemned to household work for the rest of their lives. That was why the Nepal Women's Association was involved in mobilizing popular support to change that state of affairs. Change was desirable not only on moral grounds but also because of socio-economic considerations. The Association had a two-pronged approach: firstly, to persuade the Government to adopt legislation prohibiting discrimination against women and ensuring equal opportunities; and secondly, to educate people in order to overcome traditional prejudices.

22. Social transformation to a large extent depended on the political context. The recent political changes in Nepal heralding democracy and political pluralism would undoubtedly help to eliminate discrimination against women. Women had, moreover, played a vital role in the pro-democracy movement.

23. Nepal would soon adopt a new constitution reaffirming equal rights for men and women and reserving some seats for women in the national legislature. Throughout the country women in all walks of life were gaining an awareness of their status and were forming organizations to promote their cause. One of the pioneer non-governmental organizations, the Nepal Women's Association, founded in 1947 and re-established after a 30-year ban, had already opened branch offices throughout the country. Inspired by the principles of democratic socialism, nationalism and fundamental human rights, the Association aimed to include women in the development process by making them socially and economically self-reliant. The task was arduous. The Association had to form and train a cadre of motivated volunteers,

(Mrs. Karmacharya, Nepal)

learn from the experience of other countries, formulate policy options and legal instruments, and develop projects and find ways of implementing them. International co-operation was essential to those ends.

24. At the regional level the seven countries of south Asia had been working together in addressing women's emancipation within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) since its estalishment in 1985. The member countries held expert group meetings on a regular basis to develop strategies, and had decided to mobilize public opinion in the SAARC region by declaring 1990 the Year of the Girl Child.

25. At the international level, her delegation commended the role played by the United Nations in the advancement of women, particularly by the declaration in 1975 of the International Women's Year and the adoption in 1985 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which contained extremely valuable recommendations in the areas of education, population and health. Her delegation firmly believed that strict implementation of the Strategies would ensure full participation by women in national development and that the declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women had contributed to bringing the role of women in development and peace into sharper focus. She hoped that the world conference on women, to be held in 1995, would provide an opportunity to review progress to date, and she welcomed the offer by the Austrian Government to host the conference at Vienna. Nepal considered the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to be the most important instrument for the advancement of women and was considering acceding to it.

26. She thanked all the relevant United Nations agencies, the World Bank and IMF for their support and appealed to them to continue to pay attention to the role of women, particularly rural women, in development, by formulating projects in the field of education, maternal and child welfare, employment and social services. Her delegation also commended the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), whose assistance had been most helpful in the areas of research studies, project identification and training of personnel, and stressed the importance of UNDP's efforts to redefine development in terms of human values and quality of life. She urged those organizations to go a step further and earmark an appropriate portion of their regular assistance for innovative field programmes for women. Such assistance, to be more effective, should be managed by nationals of recipient countries in view of local sensitivities. She noted with satisfaction that the role of women in sustained development had been duly recognized in the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. The international efforts to eliminate discrimination against women must not lose their momentum at a time when the international political context was witnessing the emergence of a new order based on peace and co-operation.

27. Mrs. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) noted that the cultures of the world, which in other respects were so diverse, had, in a rare example of convergence, carefully nurtured a tradition of exploiting women over several millenniums. It was only at the end of the previous century that some women had begun to tackle the mountain of prejudices by organizing themselves to defend their interests and those of their sisters. Almost another century had elapsed before attempts to ensure the full acceptance of women as individuals had led to the adoption in 1979 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and, in 1985, of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. In the five years since Nairobi, progress had been slow, largely due to the current economic situation.

28. Since developing countries were the most affected and 82 per cent of the population of Madagascar was rural, her delegation drew attention to the deterioration in the living conditions of women in rural areas. Wages remained stagnant in relation to the costs of imported basic products, male unemployment was increasing, and women were obliged to seek employment in the informal sector where conditions of work were deplorable. Moreover, austerity measures taken by Governments had led to a reduction in public expenditure, particularly in the social domain, which worsened still further the situation of women and children. Rural women were more affected than city dwellers, since the economic situation exacerbated traditional discriminatory attitudes and in effect put the means of production, including land, credit and the training which could rescue them from poverty, out of their reach. More than ever before rural women were confined to wretched agricultural, household or family work. Before the crisis they had been able to benefit from the product of their labour, but the simple yet effective education, health and transport infrastructures had so deteriorated that there had been a renewal of the male rural exodus. The nature of rural life had been altered thereby: women alone had had to shoulder the burden of responsibilities which had previously been shared, and poverty among women was spreading. In turn women themselves, particularly the young, were migrating to towns, in a futile quest for work.

29. A further consequence of the deterioration in the quality of life in rural areas was the deterioration in health conditions. Vulnerability to infectious and parasitic diseases (tuberculosis and malaria) and increased maternal mortality were attributable above all to social, economic, cultural and educational factors. As a result output was falling, aggravating an already catastrophic financial situation.

30. Women made up 51 per cent of the population of Madagascar. Though a significant number were found in medicine, law, teaching and private enterprise, their potential was not sufficiently tapped. National accounting mechanisms did not take into consideration women's work in the home and in the fields as a visible economic factor. She noted that 40.3 per cent of the country's illiterate population were women against 28.5 per cent men. Girls accounted for 46 per cent of the student population in primary schools, 45 per cent in secondary schools, and 43 per cent in higher education. The Constitution guaranteed the same rights to Malagasy women as to men, but women could not take advantage of those rights, for lack of education. Her Government, convinced that the promotion of women would contribute to the well-being and prosperity of all, had passed a series of laws in

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

July 1990 to correct various anomalies or injustices. A married woman could now keep her own name, take her husband's, or use both. Upon divorce, the wife had the right to an equal share with her husband of the common marital property; the couple's place of residence was decided by mutual agreement.

31. Her delegation welcomed the action by United Nations organizations to improve the status of women. It supported the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women aimed at combating the feminization of poverty in developing countries, no longer in the form of piecemeal charitable measures, but through programmes integrated into general economic efforts.

32. Ms. Zindoga (Zimbabwe) took the Chair.

33. Mr. STUART (Australia) emphasized the significance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, as well as the connection between the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. He believed that their link could be strengthened without undermining the independence of the Committee, which he felt did not receive the support it deserved from the United Nations Secretariat. As a demonstration of the importance it attached to the Committee's work and to universal accession to the Convention, Australia would join New Zealand in sponsoring a symposium for countries of the South Pacific Forum in March 1991.

34. His delegation wished to emphasize the progress which still must be made towards full implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, particularly in improving the situation of women who were doubly disadvantaged: elderly women, who faced problems such as isolation, neglect, ill-health and lack of a secure income; women with disabilities, who were less likely than men with disabilities to be satisfactorily employed or to have access to rehabilitation, vocational training or recreation; migrant women in many countries, including Australia, faced with language problems and difficulties in reconciling their status in their society of origin and in their new home. They were sometimes more susceptible to labour exploitation. Women heading households, refugee women and women who were victims of violence could also be added.

35. Identifying those doubly vulnerable groups of women could lead to an understanding of the broader phenomenon of feminization of poverty. It should not be believed that assistance to women in such situations reduced their incentive for advancement. Without access to tangible resources such as marketable skills, land and capital, they could not break the vicious circle. One way to help them break out was to emphasize education as a means of eliminating prejudices and stereotypes, to inform women of their rights and to teach them the necessary skills for professional and political life. Two thirds of the world's illiterate population were women. Yet female literacy would reduce maternal and infant mortality rates, improve family nutrition, reduce population growth, and also represent an investment in the literacy of future generations. UNDP had estimated that if an additional $5 billion could be found immediately, developing countries could enjoy universal primary education by the year 2000.

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(Mr. Stuart, Australia)

36. Health was also of primary importance for women. For many women working in addition to taking responsibility for children and other dependants, the problem had many dimensions. Every minute, a woman died somewhere in the world from causes associated with pregnancy. Four out of every five such deaths could have been avoided through establishment of appropriate centres, training and education. Furthermore, his delegation believed that more attention must be paid to traditional practices harmful to women, especially to young women. In many countries, those practices were directly related to the status of women, and efforts to eradicate them would represent a step towards equal status for women.

37. In almost all countries, whatever their stage of economic development, women tended to be concentrated at the lower end of the employment structure, and the most vulnerable groups were even more easily exploited. In order to increase the economic participation of women, they must be assured of equal access to training, equal treatment and equal pay, and have broader access to support services, particularly child care, family planning and labour-saving technology.

38. The underrepresentation of women in decision-making and in political life, which would be taken up at the interregional seminar in Vienna in September 1991, was also of major concern to his delegation.

39. The overall goal was to ensure greater social justice, thus allowing the economic potential of all countries to be better utilized, especially in developing regions. There had been much discussion in 1990 of possible "peace dividends". It might also be useful to consider an "equality dividend". The establishment of a more dynamic and more just society would help put an end to the cost of growing inequality, to the loss of potential resources for economic and social development, to environmental degradation and to deterioration of the social fabric. His delegation wished to underscore the key element of such an evolution: the political will to make it a reality.

40. Mrs. GRES (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on agenda item 101, said that despite the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, women were far from actually enjoying equal rights. That was particularly true for the most vulnerable groups - single women, elderly women, women with disabilities, and migrant women - whose numbers were growing everywhere because of political instability, including in the Soviet Union.

41. Two categories of closely related priority problems could be identified: (a) ecological problems and (b) protection of children against violence, alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution and AIDS.

42. Each era had its problems; the end of the twentieth century would be known for ecological catastrophes, which often resulted from misuse of technological progress in military or industrial fields. That was a particularly painful question for the Byelorussian SSR because of the Chernobyl accident, but no one could remain indifferent, because there were many nuclear plants in the world whose security could never be 100 per cent guaranteed. Nuclear weapons represented an even more serious danger. For that reason an international movement against nuclear testing had been formed.

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(Mrs. Gres, Byelorussian SSR)

43. In July 1990, the Byelorussian Parliament had declared the Republic a denuclearized zone. She would not want other women to live through the same anxiety as Byelorussian mothers. In the irradiated areas, the proportion of deformed newborns was 1.5 to 2 times above normal. For many years to come, Byelorussian women would hesitate to have children. Pathological changes in lymphocyte genotypes were 3.5 to 4.5 times more frequent in women living in contaminated areas than those living in safe areas. It was expected that in 30 years (one generation) 1.5 to 3 tonnes per inhabitant of other, equally mutagenic toxic agents would be added to the nuclear radiation. Genetic problems would be likely to affect several generations of Byelorussians.

44. In January 1990, the Byelorussian Women's League had been founded, demonstrating the growing importance of the United Nations Development Fund for Women. In addition to attempting to alleviate the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, the League was fighting against drug addiction, alcoholism, smoking and prostitution, was working for a rebirth of national consciousness and for the cultural development of Byelorussians and other nationalities living in the Byelorussian SSR, and was calling for the organization of a professional army and forms of national service other than military service.

45. For those initiatives to bear fruit, the United Nations had to support the development of national machinery designed to achieve the effective participation of women at all levels of decision-making, whether on regional or on universal questions.

46. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic welcomed the Austrian offer with regard to the world conference on women (A/C.3/45/5).

47. Mrs. MIGNOTT (Jamaica) said that since the advancement of women was an essential factor in achieving economic growth and social well-being, no society could sustain for very long a less than optimum utilization of that half of the planet's human resources.

48. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies continued to be the principal framework for action to advance the status of women up to the year 2000, and were a reminder to Governments of the political commitment which they had made with regard to women in approving them.

49. Quite apart from the fact that cultural traditions and the level of resources could slow down the action of certain Governments in that area, there was still entrenched resistance to women's advancement, a cause which the economic crisis of the 1980s had already somewhat pushed into the background. The preparatory work for the 1995 world conference on women should help in pointing the way to the approach for the remainder of the Decade, bearing in mind the changing world economic, political and social scenario and the experience gained since 1985.

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

50. The Commission on the Status of Women had undertaken the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Strategies at its thirty-fourth session. That had enabled it to reach a number of conclusions with regard to the areas deserving of priority attention. Emphasis should be placed on: (1) the role of education in reducing stereotyping of women's roles in society and in providing women with the skills necessary for economic and political integration; (2) renewing efforts to eliminate disparities in pay between men and women on the basis of the principle of equal pay for equal output, including measurement of the economic value of women's unpaid work; (3) ensuring better representation of women in economic and political decision-making, where women were significantly underrepresented at the present time; and (4) stressing the important role that women had to play in preserving the environment.

51. The national machinery played a pivotal role in ensuring that women's concerns were incorporated in national policies. Its efficient functioning required the support of the Government in terms of increased staffing and funds.

52. With regard to the recruitment of women to the Secretariat of the United Nations, the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) revealed that in June 1990, women accounted for 28.3 per cent of the staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, whereas the General Assembly had recommended that the level should be raised to 30 per cent by the end of 1990. Jamaica appreciated the interaction between the Secretariat and the Missions on that question, through the establishment of focal points in Missions. That type of initiative had to be pursued, so that women could occupy a greater number of high-level posts and enjoy better career and promotion prospects.

53. Jamaica thanked the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, whose interesting presentation had illustrated the role played by the Fund in promoting projects of benefit to women or involving women in their management and execution.

54. The tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to be celebrated in 1991, would give countries an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to the principles of the Convention, or to accede to it. As a State party to the Convention, Jamaica reaffirmed the guiding principle of its own Constitution, which guaranteed fundamental rights and freedoms for all without distinction based on gender or any other grounds. Her Government was striving towards implementation of the following four principles: (1) all policies of the Government must reflect a recognition of the equal and complementary partnership of women and men; (2) economic and social development policies and programmes must provide for equal access to resources for both men and women; (3) in policy planning, special consideration must be given to the multiple responsibilities of women, both as income-earners and in the household, in particular of those who were sole supporters of their families; (4) special measures must be developed to compensate for historic and current disadvantages experienced by women. The Bureau of Women's Affairs of Jamaica had been established in 1974 and operated in close contact with women's organizations, and

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

with the ministries of Government through an inter-ministerial committee established to pursue, at the level of each ministry, the goal of incorporating women in all aspects of national life. Jamaica wished to stress that regional and cross-regional co-operation between governmental and non-governmental groups was a valuable means of promoting change and strengthening common bonds on behalf of women's advancement.

55. Mrs. PELLICER (Mexico) noted that while the appraisal of the first five years of the United Nations Decade for Women had merited a World Conference which had caught the attention of international public opinion, the report on the review and appraisal of the first five years of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies had been submitted in 1990 only to the Commission on the Status of Women (E/1990/25) and had made only a very modest impact, which pointed to a diminished awareness of the obstacles that still stood in the way of the advancement of women.

56. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Strategies (A/45/489) painted a gloomy picture of the status of women. It reported that while de jure equality might have advanced, de facto equality was coming only slowly. The extended resistance to women's advancement and the reduction of resources available for change, together with the world economic situation in the late 1980s had resulted in a loss of impetus and even stagnation in some areas. It was thus necessary both to apply those recommendations which would be likely to improve the pace of implementation of the Strategies and to study the obstacles to their implementation.

57. Mexico was particularly interested in those recommendations dealing with women and development, notably those covering the problems of concern to the largest sectors of the world's female population, on which particular emphasis would have to be laid in the years to come, namely, the effects of structural readjustments on the status of women, feminization of poverty, and the health and nutrition of women.

58. The structural readjustments which most developing countries had carried out to meet the economic crisis of the 1980s had had adverse socio-economic effects on the situation of women. There was therefore an urgent need to take measures to combat those negative effects, for example by giving women easier access to credit, productive inputs, markets and decision-making.

59. With regard to feminization of poverty, it had to be pointed out that the number of women living in dire poverty, far from going down, had increased considerably over the past few years. It was thus important to promote educational and training activities to provide women with productive activities so as to break the troubling vicious circle.

60. Since the beginning of the 1980s, a deterioration in the health and nutrition of women had been taking place in many parts of the developing world. That particularly alarming situation had repercussions for neonatal health and for infant survival. Mexico appealed once again for the improvement of the health of women by the year 2000 to be made a priority, by the provision to them of appropriate and accessible health services.

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(Mrs. Pellicer, Mexico)

61. The world conference on women to be held in 1995 had to be prepared with the greatest care, since it could help to mobilize governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for the advancement of women. Such mobilization would be especially important as it would make it possible to bring the problems to the attention of parts of the world which had not had an opportunity to host a world conference.

62. On the matter of preparations for the conference, she hoped that the mistake would not be made again of basing the documentation on questionnaires that were so technical that the countries to which they were addressed had to be helped to answer them, including countries with quite advanced national machinery for dealing with women's problems. She therefore repeated the appeal of the Economic and Social Council that, in drawing up the second five-year report, in addition to country reports, the analyses of statistical data produced by United Nations bodies as well as other governmental and non-governmental bodies should be taken into consideration.

63. The Forward-looking Strategies should be the basis of the conference's agenda. Room would, of course, have to be made for new concerns, such as women and the environment or women and the process of economic and political liberalization, while at the same time retaining the useful frame of reference constituted by the three major themes of equality, development and peace.

64. Her delegation was surprised at the scope of the terms of reference apparently to be assigned to the interregional consultation on women in public life, as a "preparatory activity to the 1995 world conference". Her delegation would like further details of the recommendation authorizing that consultation and the arrangements for participation by Member States.

65. Turning to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, she said that, in all, the Committee had examined 58 initial reports and 11 second periodic reports. The membership of the Committee had enabled it to analyse the many ways in which the Convention was implemented in the various countries, and to review frankly and in detail the various substantive questions posed by its full implementation, in particular that of article 21, to which the Committee referred in chapter IV of its report to the General Assembly (A/45/38). Thus, the Committee had formulated two general recommendations of great importance to the situation of women in the area of health and child care, concerning such traditional practices as female circumcision, which had serious health and other consequences for women and children, and the need to avoid any discrimination against women, even implicit, in the implementation of strategies for the prevention and control of AIDS.

66. The international community should strengthen its support for the Committee so that it could review the reports of States Parties at the proper time.

(Mrs. Pellicer, Mexico)

67. The position of women in the United Nations Secretariat continued to be a matter of great concern. The Secretary-General's report on the matter showed no real change in participation by women, especially at the senior and intermediate levels, and particularly in the specialized agencies. It was all very well to ask countries to nominate candidates for vacant posts, but that did not imply a commitment and a political will to end the discrimination against women at various levels.

68. She noted that the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women had succeeded in restructuring the administrative and financial management of UNIFEM. The Fund's resources had been increased, which was a proof of confidence on the part of donors and also in part the result of the new policy of mobilizing finance, but they were still modest.

69. UNIFEM would therefore be well-advised to concentrate for the time being on programmes with a multiplyer effect, on avoiding duplication, particularly in regard to research, and on organizing major South-South co-operation activities. Often the developing countries were unable to make large financial contributions but could give other countries the benefit of their experience in collaboration with UNIFEM. The Fund was the only United Nations body which had received as part of its explicit terms of reference the provision of financial and technical support for the participation of women in all aspects of the development process by facilitating access to resources that rendered such participation more effective. She urged the Director of the Fund to continue her efforts to improve its effectiveness.

70. Ms. ENGMAN (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, recalled that, despite the efforts of the United Nations system to improve the status of women, including the convening of three world conferences since 1975, the Commission on the Status of Women had revealed, when it undertook the five year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies at its thirty-fourth session (E/1990/25), that that implementation had encountered obstacles both at the Member State level and within the United Nations system. In other words, although the situation was evolving - which was inevitable since society needed to take all its resources into consideration in order to further development - such changes were very slow. In some areas, progress towards equality of opportunity for men and women was at a standstill, in particular in the field of education. Moreover, a feminization of poverty was being experienced in both developing and developed countries.

71. The Nordic countries were glad that the Commission on the Status of Women had been able to reach a consensus to the effect that the Economic and Social Council should adopt a document containing a set of recommendations to accelerate the process of implementing the Strategies. They reaffirmed their commitment to preserve the spirit of consensus already reached at the Nairobi Conference. They remained convinced that the United Nations must serve as a model for all aspects of the implementation of the Strategies, especially the participation of women in development.

(Ms. Engman, Sweden)

72. Year after year, the General Assembly had reaffirmed its determination to increase the number of women in the Secretariat. It must be recognized, however, that the goal of having 30 per cent of the posts subject to geographical distribution occupied by women by the end of 1990 would not be reached. Moreover, the Secretary-General's report on the matter (A/45/548) showed that women were traditionally recruited for lower-level positions. She believed it was important to institute a fair recruitment policy for posts in all categories, and senior-level posts in particular. The Secretary-General should take immediate steps to remedy the situation and Governments should present more women candidates. It was also important to try to recruit men to the categories where women were in the majority. It was imperative to achieve by the end of 1995, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/3, a rate of participation by women of 35 per cent, without prejudice to the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts. In that connection, the Nordic countries welcomed the Secretariat initiative whereby Permanent Missions in New York would be invited to nominate a member of their staff as a focal point for women's questions, as well as the idea of establishing a network of focal points in every department and office in the Secretariat. They believed it was important for senior officers to be nominated for such posts, both in the Secretariat and at the Permanent Missions.

73. As far as increasing participation by women in United Nations peace-keeping and peace-making operations was concerned, the Nordic countries could not subscribe to the scenario described in paragraph 19 of the Secretary-General's report, whereby men would be sent out to participate in missions while women would remain at Headquarters where they would have "opportunities" to "demonstrate their abilities to perform higher-level jobs". Apparently the reverse situation never arose.

74. Regarding the distribution of women by region of origin, the Nordic countries would like Member States and the Secretariat to give women from Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East an opportunity to participate on an equal footing with women from other regions in the work of the Secretariat. Moreover, Member States should, in accordance with the Forward-looking Strategies, give women more opportunity to participate in decision-making both at the national level and within the Organization.

75. The convening of a world conference on women could help to keep the issue of improving their situation constantly on the agenda, both nationally and internationally, since by giving questions concerning women greater visibility the conference would encourage Member States to implement measures to improve the situation of women and to report on them. The Nordic countries therefore supported the convening of a fourth world conference in 1995. The Commission on the Status of Women should be designated as its preparatory body. The Nordic countries themselves were currently discussing the convening of a Nordic regional conference in 1994, as a follow-up to the Nordic Forum held in 1988. The new Forum would serve as the regional preparatory body for the 1995 international conference and would give the Nordic countries an opportunity to exchange experience and put forward their views.

(Ms. Engman, Sweden)

76. The issue of women and the environment would be on the agenda of the 1992 session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Nordic countries saw a close link between that fact and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which would be held the same year.

77. With respect to the work done by the Nordic countries to provide equal opportunities for men and women, she pointed out the importance of the measures to be taken to facilitate a combination of gainful employment and family life for women. The Nordic countries felt that it was indispensable to respect the principle of equal pay for equal work.

78. Regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it had sometimes been difficult to persuade States parties to the Convention to submit their initial reports and their second periodic reports. Furthermore, a considerable number of countries had entered many substantive reservations when acceding to the Convention and the Nordic countries urged them to withdraw those reservations.

79. The Nordic countries wished to highlight the importance of the general recommendation adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38), regarding the circumcision of women. They urged those countries which had not already done so to adhere to the Convention.

80. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas) said that she regarded the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Forward-looking Strategies adopted by the Nairobi Conference as the most substantial initiatives that had been adopted to translate the legal and constitutional equality of both sexes into a social, economic and political reality. Her delegation had taken note with interest of the review and appraisal of the first five years of implementation of the Strategies on which the Commission on the Status of Women had embarked at its forty-fourth session; her delegation found, however, that the recommendations concerning the immediate measures to be taken, in such areas as education, the economic sector, and economic and political decision-making, to remove the main obstacles to the application of the Strategies were more instructional. The benefits of those collective efforts focusing on the advancement of women would certainly be maximized if Governments would give due regard to those recommendations. The priority themes for the period 1993-1996, which the Commission on the Status of Women had included in its report (E/1990/25), would facilitate identification of those areas where action was required.

81. Her delegation was particularly interested in the subject of "Vulnerable women, including migrant women", which would be discussed at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission because there was a growing number of women in the Bahamas who were single heads of households. The proportion had increased from 20 per cent in 1950 to 40 per cent in 1990 and could be explained by various factors, such as teenage pregnancy, marital dissolution and single parenting by choice. Present realities imposed an obligation on States to place certain questions high on their agendas: child care, teenage pregnancy, equal pay for equal work and social support services. The conclusions of the group of experts

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(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

that would meet in Vienna (Austria) in November 1990 and those of the Commission on the Status of Women should facilitate policy planning and decision-making in those areas.

82. Concerning the second priority theme (national, regional and international machinery for the integration of women in the development process), those national mechanisms which had a key role to play were often still not very effective. Thought should, therefore, be given to determining how best they could be improved to enable them to discharge their duties successfully. As far as the Bahamas was concerned, it had diversified and strengthened the co-ordinating, consultation and information functions of the Women's Desk which had now become the Women's Unit and was anxious that the conclusions of the Commission on strengthening national mechanisms would enable it to improve or strengthen its work even more.

83. The Bahamas felt that the issue of refugee and displaced women and children had been appropriately chosen as the third priority theme. The Commission might perhaps also wish to take a decision on the situation of women who migrated for economic reasons and did not really fall within any of the categories provided.

84. Preparations for the world conference on women, to be held in Austria in 1995, should be both national and regional. It had already been agreed that regional preparatory meetings would be held in 1993 and 1994 for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia. The preparatory work could even begin as early as 1991, within the framework of the regular session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the interregional consultation on women in public life, scheduled to be held in Vienna in September 1991.

85. The limited involvement of women in political and public life was certainly an obstacle to their general advancement. Strategies should, therefore, be devised to increase that involvement. Governments and political parties had been preparing women to play a role in political life at the highest levels. In her country 3 of the 16 senators, 2 of the 49 members of Parliament and 1 junior minister were women.

86. The interregional consultation was to prepare an agenda for political action during the first half of the decade, that would mobilize all women to participate actively in the political process. However, it should broaden its scope of study to include all aspects of policy-making and decision-making from the grass-roots level upwards. It would have its greatest impact if it were attended by high-level officials representing a broad spectrum of political ideas and decision-making activities. The deliberations of the group of experts to meet in May 1991 in Vienna would be crucial to the success of the consultation. As many countries as possible (and especially developing countries) should participate in the consultation and its work should be given the requisite public information and media support.

87. Her delegation noted that, despite the administrative efforts and the emergency measures taken, the target of 30 per cent women in posts subject to geographical distribution in the United Nations Secretariat by 1990 had not been

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

met. Significant gains had been made in the lower levels of the hierarchy but virtually none at the senior decision-making level. The mechanism for recruiting women to the Secretariat should be reviewed and a concerted effort made to recruit women at the senior levels in order to reach the 35 per cent target set for women by 1995.

88. Her delegation was pleased to note that a large number of seminars, meetings and expert groups had been organized to provide guidance and information on issues concerning women and pointed out that the Bahamas National Women's Conference scheduled to be held in November-December 1990 on the topic of "Women and AIDS" would certainly benefit from the work of the seminar recently held in Vienna on that subject.

89. Her delegation also commended UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women for the work they had done in involving women in the development process, because such work was particularly useful in the developing countries.

90. As the result of a determined policy, the Bahamian Government had succeeded in ensuring equal participation of women in both education and employment.

91. Mrs. JAHAN (Bangladesh) said that her delegation had studied with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (A/45/489). She observed that a huge gap still persisted between awareness and implementation as well as between official pronouncements and traditional attitudes. Bangladesh supported the recommendations made on that subject by the Commission on the Status of Women and hoped that they would determine the measures to be taken in the areas of women's education, employment and participation in decision-making.

92. It was at the national level that the status and role of women could best be advanced. Her Government had endeavoured to integrate women into the mainstream development process both as agents and as beneficiaries. The Ministry of Women's Affairs co-ordinated national policies and programmes concerning women, and the national development plans were based on a multisectoral approach to women's development. The major focus of the Government's efforts was to reduce imbalances in education, health and employment, with priority attention to the special needs of disabled, destitute and socially handicapped women. Since 1990, education for girls up to a certain level was provided free of charge. Other measures had been taken for girls who were the only child in the family, and for women primary-school teachers. Women were also a major target group under the programme "Health for all by the year 2000".

93. The share of women in the country's labour force was very small, which was why employment quotas had been fixed and the age-limit for entry into government service extended. Career women's hostels and day-care centres for the children of working mothers had been opened to encourage women to enter non-traditional employment. In Bangladesh, 85 per cent of women lived in rural areas. Their

(Mrs. Jahan, Bangladesh)

welfare was therefore an important element in the rural development programme. Bangladesh had introduced innovative credit schemes such as the Grameen Bank, which successfully assisted women in undertaking income-generating activities.

94. The Government had enacted legislation to improve the status of women, but the law could only set guidelines and could not change attitudes. It was there that the media had a decisive role to play. Gender-biased stereotypes should also be removed from teaching, a task to which the Government had committed itself. Moreover, there was a crucial need for "legal literacy" among women, and to that effect Bangladesh had introduced free advisory services for women who were unaware of their legal rights or too poor to pay for litigation expenses.

95. The difficulties encountered by women had been further accentuated by the deterioration of the economic situation. Experience showed that social programmes were the first to suffer from economic adjustment, and that women bore the brunt of such cut-backs. Fortunately, the socio-economic impact was increasingly being scrutinized, and development programmes at the international level were giving priority to the advancement of women. The Programme of Action of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris from 3 to 14 September 1990, contained recommendations on the full integration of women in the development process. Similarly, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Decade for Development before the General Assembly contained provisions on women under the item of human resources development. Bangladesh regretted, however, that the issue of women in development did not feature as a separate priority item in the Strategy.

96. In future, global programmes of action should explicitly address women's concerns. In that regard, the inclusion of an item on women and the environment in the agenda of the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women was a welcome development. The Commission might formulate useful recommendations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development scheduled for 1992. Bangladesh also hoped that the International Year of the Family would provide an opportunity for particular attention to be given to the concerns of women as members of the family, especially the issue of domestic violence.

97. Bangladesh considered that Governments must play the central role in implementing programmes and strategies adopted at the international level. However, they could not succeed without concerted action at both the regional and global levels. The United Nations system, especially the Commission on the Status of Women, would continue to contribute usefully to women's advancement. The activities of WHO, FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO and UNDP were also commendable, although system-wide co-ordination and planning should be strengthened. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had also initiated important research and training programmes, and it was to be hoped that the Institute would give priority to programmes to be established in the least developed countries. Bangladesh welcomed UNIFEM's innovative strategies in promoting women's integration in development in the developing countries and the valuable assistance it had received, especially in the upliftment of rural women.

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(Mrs. Jahan, Bangladesh)

98. The priority themes to be discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session must address the causes of the particular vulnerability of disabled, elderly, migrant and refugee women. Bangladesh hoped that the expert group on vulnerable women, scheduled to meet at Vienna in November 1990, would adequately address that issue.

99. On the subject of development, it was particularly important to examine ways of strengthening national machinery in the developing countries; its effectiveness depended largely on the availability of financial and human resources. In Bangladesh, a National Council for Women's Development would soon be set up to monitor the multisectoral women's development programmes in co-ordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

100. In some regions a radical change in the political situation was necessary for the advancement of women living in situations of armed conflict, foreign occupation and racial discrimination, and of those who were "refugees in their own homes". Urgent action must be taken to assist women suffering under apartheid in South Africa and women living in the territories occupied by Israel.

101. Mrs. NDIAYE (Senegal), Minister for the Status of Women and Children, recalled that in February 1988 Senegal had submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women its first report which was being updated and provided the background to the action taken until 1987 to ensure the legal protection and social and economic advancement of women.

102. The principle of de facto equality, affirmed in the Constitution of Senegal, was also included in the Family Code, the Social Security Code, the General Civil Service Statute and the Educational Policy Act. Senegal's will to recognize equality of the sexes had prompted it to ratify or accede to all international conventions on the specific rights of women, from the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age (Geneva, 11 October 1933) to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

103. However, at the social and family level, a number of restrictions to the principle of equality had been brought to the attention of the competent authorities. Accordingly, article 154 of the Family Code, which authorized a husband to oppose his wife's professional activity if the interests of the family so warranted, and article 436 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which prevented a wife from claiming her own property when it had been confiscated together with that of her husband at their principal place of residence, had been repealed in February 1989. Article 152 of the Family Code, whereby the husband was the head of the family and entitled to determine the couple's place of residence, remained in force; although it was indeed contrary to article 16 of the Convention, it was assumed that, where full employment of women existed enabling them to participate financially in household expenses, that article would be deemed obsolete. In order to strengthen the protection of women, action had also been taken against forced marriages [a woman married under 16 years of age could claim the marriage to be null and void (art. 142)] and against repudiations [the husband could be required

(Mrs. Ndiaye, Senegal)

to pay alimony (art. 162)]. Moreover, in the event of marriage, a Senegalese woman did not lose her original nationality and foreign women were not obliged to opt for Senegalese nationality. When custody of a child was granted to a woman, she could continue to compel the father to contribute to maintenance of the child (arts. 289 to 292).

104. On the subject of political rights, de jure equality existed since the introduction of universal suffrage in 1956. In regard to employment and economic rights, the protection of women was ensured (regulation of night work, prohibition of dismissal during sickness and maternity leave, full payment of wages during maternity leave). The Labour Code guaranteed equal access by men and women to all jobs and equal pay for equal work, a principle that was strictly applied in the public administration but to a lesser extent in the military and in the private sector, which was primarily concerned with profitability.

105. It must nevertheless be recognized that socio-cultural obstacles (prejudices or stereotypes) persisted, and that women, having been integrated more recently into the educational sector, were less competitive for certain jobs. Moreover, women often were unaware of legal provisions in their favour. For that reason, the Senegalese Government had made a special effort to disseminate the texts, particularly to rural populations, as part of a national functional literacy programme.

106. With regard to agenda item 102, she said that education was one of the sectors that had made the most progress in the 1980s. School enrolment was estimated at 56.4 per cent for children of both sexes aged 7 to 12. Overall, the number of female students had doubled at all levels and had tripled in secondary education between 1977/78 and 1988/89. The Senegalese Government's objective was to maintain parity between the sexes throughout the school system by measures to reduce drop-outs, especially among girls (as a result of early marriages or family social or economic pressures). The fact that the heads of secondary schools were no longer allowed to expel unwed mothers would assist that effort, as would the distribution of textbooks and school supplies without charge to all public educational institutions, enacted by the State in 1989. The number of female students in higher education had also greatly increased, particularly in the fields of medicine and pharmacy and at the National Higher College of Technology.

107. Those figures should not divert attention from the approximately 80 per cent of Senegalese women who were illiterate. Although pilot programmes to eliminate illiteracy had been undertaken in the context of development projects, Senegal was still far from its objective of a national programme to combat illiteracy. For that reason, it had decided in 1989 to incorporate functional literacy training in all future development projects for women.

108. In the employment sector, women had represented 26 per cent of civil servants in 1989 and had progressed at all levels of public administration, as a result of improved educational preparation for girls and of legislation banning employment discrimination against women, in terms of both access to employment and opportunities for promotion.

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(Mrs. Ndiaye, Senegal)

109. In the political sphere, the majority party reserved 25 per cent of all posts for women, in all offices except the Political Office, where the figure was only 10 per cent. Despite those encouraging developments, it must be noted that there were still few women in decision-making posts.

110. It also could not be ignored that the great majority of women belonged to the informal sector of the economy, which was poorly managed and received little recognition even though it played an essential role in providing for the needs of the population.

111. The improvement of women's participation in agriculture and production was less apparent, despite the introduction of new equipment and new services (such as access to agricultural inputs and to credit, supervisory and extension services, and participation of women in rural councils). The National Federation of Groups for the Advancement of Women was a member of the advisory group established by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to promote co-operation with non-governmental organizations, and would soon be represented on the Board of Directors of the National Agricultural Credit Bank. The efforts of the Senegalese Government and of women themselves had been hampered by the vicissitudes of rainfall, on which agriculture depended, and by the decrease in farm income.

112. On the basis of its experience, Senegal formulated three recommendations: (1) To encourage women to take charge of their own problems, and to provide upstream the necessary means to trigger and sustain the process; (2) At the macro-economic level, to give priority to the integration of women into the major development activities, in the context of participatory development; and (3) To strengthen government machinery for the advancement of women, which had been weakened in recent years by budgetary constraints, as well as grass-roots women's organizations.

113. The reorganization of the Administration in March 1990 had provided an opportunity for the appointment of a Deputy Minister dealing with the status of women and children, reporting to the President of the Republic. A study conducted in 1988 by national experts financed by UNIFEM had shown that the best way to integrate women into the economic and social development of the country would be: (1) to establish national machinery for designing and directing the entire national policy on the advancement of women, and for evaluating and supervising the implementation of sectoral programmes administered by other technical departments of the Government; and (2) to appoint staff to all the technical ministerial departments who would see that each department included a women's component in the process of economic and social development. The Deputy Minister was assisted in his task by a cabinet of experts and an interministerial committee to monitor the policy for the advancement of women and children. In addition to those arrangements, a national advisory commission on the status of women and children had been established, as well as a sub-commission on the integration of women.

114. The structural adjustment programme instituted in 1983 should bring about a medium-term increase in real per capita income, which would not, however, be uniformly distributed among the various socio-economic groups, especially in the

(Mrs. Ndiaye, Senegal)

short term. It should have beneficial consequences for incomes in the rural sector, but it was expected that the reduction of salaries, along with the restructuring of enterprises, the reform of the banking sector and the liberalization of the economy, would cause a decline in employment opportunities and real incomes. While the consumer price index had virtually quintupled between 1970 and 1989, incomes had practically stagnated. The repercussions of those conditions on women were threefold: firstly, budgetary constraints were limiting the State's ability to invest in the social sectors; secondly, the restructuring of businesses in the secondary and tertiary sectors had led to a loss of employment for many women (and sometimes for their spouses as well); thirdly, the family budget was being increasingly eroded. To counteract the transitory adverse effects of the adjustment, the Senegalese Government had established a human resources development programme in which women occupied a central place.

115. It was also essential that institutions which dealt with questions relating to women (UNDP, UNIFEM, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, United Nations agencies and continental, subregional and bilateral co-operation organizations) should be sustained. That necessity was one which the international community (particularly the World Bank) should clearly understand.

116. The Senegalese Government had invited the fifth Regional Conference of African Women to meet in Senegal in 1994 to evaluate the implementation, at the regional level, of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, and to prepare for the world conference on women to be held in 1995. Senegal had taken note of Austria's offer to host the conference.

117. In spite of all obstacles, Senegal was determined to continue to apply the Forward-looking Strategies and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

# General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE
21st meeting
held on
Friday, 26 October 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

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## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

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| Chairman: | Ms. ZINDOGA | (Zimbabwe) |
| later: | Ms. COOMBS | (New Zealand) |

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (*continued*) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/38, 202, 222, 225, 230, 254, 264, 265, 269, 270, 426; A/C.3/45/5)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (*continued*) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/347, 489, 548; A/C.3/45/5)

1. Mr. AHMAD (Malaysia) said the Government of Malaysia remained committed to the enhancement of the status of women and fully supported the recommendations and conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women after its first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, which were annexed to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15. It also supported the recommendation in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 that the next world conference on women should be held in 1995. During the preparations for that conference, account should be taken of the need to keep its costs as low as possible. He also noted the Commission's recommendations regarding national machinery for the advancement of women as contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/14, which his country fully supported. Malaysia had created its own national machinery, including the National Advisory Council on Integration of Women in Development, an advisory body directly responsible to the Prime Minister, and the Secretariat for Women's Affairs, located in the Prime Minister's department. Malaysia supported the recommendation that national machinery should be established in every State by 1995 and agreed that the United Nations system should support national machinery by all possible means in order to ensure the optimization of effort and to avoid duplication.

2. The national policy on women in Malaysia was aimed at ensuring equality in participation and development for both men and women and at integrating women in all sectors of national development. It provided guidelines for the Government on ways to achieve full and active participation of women in development. Malaysia endorsed the priority themes for the period 1993-1996 identified by the Commission (equality, development and peace), attaching particular importance to the role of women in development and the integration of women's concerns in national development planning. It also believed that the impact of the drug problem on women and children merited greater attention and supported the call for national machinery to exchange information, bilaterally or multilaterally, on issues of mutual concern.

3. In connection with the priority theme of equality, his delegation was of the view that special emphasis should be placed on disadvantaged women in the rural areas and the agricultural sector. It also firmly believed that women should be given an equal opportunity for education at a very young age in order to promote their understanding of their rights in society. In Malaysia, action was being taken to upgrade the standard of education at all levels and to facilitate the participation of women in their fields of interest. Primary education was free in

(Mr. Ahmad, Malaysia)

Malaysia, and since 1979 there had been a marked increase in the proportion of literate women, although the literacy rate for women still lagged behind that of men.

4. Ms. BOUKADOUM (Algeria) said that in 1990, after five years of implementation of the Nairobi Strategies, the international community was in a position to be objective concerning the action which had been taken in support of women and to draw the first conclusions in that regard. The Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fourth session had identified the considerable obstacles in the way of the success of the Strategies. It had concluded that the implementation of the Strategies was lagging behind and there was a danger of failing to realize the objectives set for the end of the century. Women were still suffering the effects of inequality at all levels. The resistance to women's realizing their full potential had slowed the momentum achieved at Nairobi, with the result that the status of women had not improved.

5. The situation was even worse in the developing countries where women were the victims of famine, illiteracy, poor health and poverty, in addition to which the large majority of them had suffered the crushing impact of the economic crisis of the 1980s. The economic community must take urgent action to meet their pressing needs. The case of the Palestinian women struggling courageously against the denial of their basic human rights was another area where constant vigilance was called for from the international community.

6. One third of the time allowed for the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies had already elapsed. Although the results achieved may have been disappointing in some respects, they had provided an opportunity to appraise the difficulties and find ways of overcoming them. Thus, appropriate action had been identified in the recommendations made by the Commission on the Status of Women and later adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/15, which provided the international community with a suitable framework for future action. She stressed the importance of the preparations being made for the world conference for women recommended for 1995; such a conference, if properly prepared, could spur on the world community to give practical effect to the ideal proclaimed in the Charter concerning the equality of women and men, for the well-being of all humanity.

7. Ms. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that Yemeni women had succeeded in bringing about a number of positive changes which were consistent with their society's religion, values and development objectives. The State, meanwhile, offered the facilities required to enable women to take their place alongside men as equal partners in society.

8. The first and most important such facility was education, since women had traditionally been unable to assume any responsibility outside the family context. Legislation, inspired by the Constitution of the newly united country, provided for political, economic, social and cultural equality between men and women. Such legislation reflected her Government's belief that innovation and progress was impossible without equal opportunities for all. Women had already made their mark

(Ms. Al-Hamami, Yemen)

in the sphere of administration, were entitled both to vote and to present themselves as candidates in political elections, occupied leading positions in the State legislative and executive bodies and had formed their own women's union. Through education and employment, they had thus already risen to some of the country's development challenges.

9. Women in her country were regarded as full and active partners in the process of economic and social development and were accorded priority in some areas such as social security, health care and family planning. Her Government considered the provision of those services, as well as education and training, to be a vital part of its continuing effort to ensure the elimination of discrimination against women and to facilitate the advancement of their status.

10. Mrs. SINHA (India) noted that fully one half of all humanity remained in a position of inequality and were frequently the victims of double and triple disadvantages both at work and at home, where, in addition, their unending labour often went unrecognized. The documents before the Committee testified to various disabilities of which women continued to be the victim; however, they also demonstrated the commitment that all countries had made nationally and within the context of the United Nations to do away with inequality between women and men. The causes of inequality were both structural and attitudinal. As long as the access of women to the means of production, to property and hence to power was circumscribed, real progress would not be possible. At the attitudinal level, the assumption that women constituted the weaker sex limited their options by undermining their confidence in themselves.

11. In India, greater emphasis was being laid on programmes aimed at removing gender disparities and at providing a suitable infrastructure for ensuring the health and overall development of girls. Stress was being laid on education for girls and women under the national human resource development strategy for the purpose of strengthening women's economic status and promoting self-reliance, especially by developing training skills and providing employment. Of India's 12 million economically active women who lived below the poverty line in rural areas, about 1.5 million had been provided with income-generating activities under government programmes. A national perspective plan for women up to the year 2000 had been drawn up, and a national resource centre had also been established.

12. Her Government was concerned at the finding by the Commission on the Status of Women that throughout the world women were over-represented among the poor and that the number of women living in extreme poverty had increased in the past five years. It was already implementing some of the Commission's recommendations regarding the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies. Her delegation felt that unless the women's issue was regarded as being central to the debate on development, women would be marginalized, whereas it was incumbent on the international community to ensure that they were equal participants in all aspects of life.

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(Mrs. Sinha, India)

13. In India some very innovative work had been done to improve the status of women. As a result of initiatives undertaken by women themselves, institutions had been established for providing credit to women in the informal sector of the economy who did not qualify for conventional banking services. The Government of India had recently commissioned a report which showed that a large number of households in the informal sector were headed by women whose contribution to the economy had gone unrecognized, and a project was under way to ensure that the forthcoming census was gender-sensitive.

14. Her Government supported the priority themes of equality, development and peace which the Commission on the Status of Women would examine in the period 1993-1996. It also supported the suggestion that the Commission should be responsible for monitoring those aspects of the international development strategy which pertained to women, and looked forward to participating in the preparations for the next global conference on women. With regard to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), she said India was currently chairing the Consultative Committee of UNIFEM, which continued to implement its mandate of ensuring that women were involved in the mainstream of development.

15. Ms. BACHTOBJI (Tunisia) said that her country had taken a forward-looking position in connection with the advancement of women. That position had been confirmed at the dawning of a new era in her country three years earlier, when the President had expressed his determination to safeguard women's place in society. The policies followed since independence had borne fruit in that today the women of Tunisia were more assured of their rights and duties, were better integrated into the economy and constituted a stronger presence in decision-taking and political life. They had contributed to the growth of such vital sectors as manufacturing, agriculture and services. As in most developing countries, however, much remained to be done, especially in the rural areas, where women needed better access to modern agricultural technology and to aid and credit.

16. In that connection, her delegation wished to commend UNIFEM for its sustained support of developing countries aimed at integrating women in development, and was gratified to see from the Secretary-General's report (A/45/347) that UNIFEM intended to continue assistance to Africa in food technology and the financing of micro-enterprises. It also supported UNIFEM's investment plan for Africa and looked forward to Tunisia's benefiting from such programmes.

17. Although the international community had been paying increasing attention to the advancement of women since 1985, not much tangible progress had been made in that the priority and complementary objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies had not been attained. Indeed, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/45/489), at its thirty-fourth session the Commission on the Status of Women had reached the conclusion that the achievement of the objectives agreed upon at Nairobi was at risk owing to the combined effects of certain economic and political factors. It was therefore urgent to attack all obstacles to the implementation of the Strategies. At its thirty-fifth session, the Commission would also face some tremendously important issues such as those relating to the position of women in

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(Ms. Bachtobji, Tunisia)

vulnerable groups, the strengthening of the role of national machinery for the advancement of women and the preparations for the proposed world conference on women in 1995. Her delegation was convinced that the conference would strengthen the bonds of co-operation with regard to the advancement of women throughout the entire international community and within the United Nations system, and welcomed the holding of an interregional consultation on the role of women in public life at Vienna in 1991.

18. Mr. AL-HASSAN (Jordan) said that efforts to advance the status of women must involve the enactment of legislation assuring equality of rights for men and women, as well as the heightening of women's own consciousness of their role as fully-fledged participants in society. Such efforts must be linked to each country's overall development process.

19. In his country, the advancement of women had always been an inseparable element of development. Its Constitution and laws provided for equality between men and women and prohibited any discrimination on the basis of sex. In elections, men and women enjoyed equal rights both as voters and as candidates. The promotion of such equality, which was a natural extension of the country's religious and cultural heritage, had become a permanent feature of its successive development plans. Overall responsibility for national planning in that context had since 1976 been lodged with a special Department for Women.

20. His delegation was appreciative of the efforts undertaken by UNIFEM on behalf of women in developing countries, and particularly of projects undertaken in his own country. Those projects had included assistance to the Noor al-Hussein Institute in encouraging the profitable commercialization of goods produced by women, as well as assistance to the Arab Women and Development Association in establishing a network of experts to enhance decision-makers' awareness of women's affairs and their role in national and regional development.

21. As all must be aware, Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian territories were unable to achieve the objectives of equality, development and peace because the Israeli occupation authorities denied them the most basic human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fourth Geneva Convention. The Commission on the Status of Women must therefore devote more attention to the problems of Palestinian women under Israeli occupation.

22. Miss AYE (Myanmar) said that, in view of the emerging new world order, the time was ripe to ensure the advancement of women on a global scale. Her delegation hoped that the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies would be achieved. She welcomed the recommendation in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 on increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30 per cent by 1995 and supported the convening of a world conference on women that year. Special attention should be given to the question of women and the environment so that the international community could benefit from their experience and knowledge.

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(Miss Aye, Myanmar)

23. In Myanmar, women had always occupied a privileged and independent position in society and had always enjoyed legal and economic rights. In matters concerning marriage, divorce and inheritance, the rights of Myanmar women were equal to those of men. It was encouraging to note that throughout the world the ingrained prejudice against the holding of jobs by women was decreasing. That was a clear manifestation of the ever-growing role of women in society. Although there had been considerable progress in improving the status of women at both the national and international level, much remained to be done. At the current propitious moment in history, countries must redouble their efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

24. Ms. COOMBS (New Zealand) said that her country had in many respects been at the vanguard of the women's movement. New Zealand had been the first country where women had obtained the right to vote and one of the first to establish an autonomous government department for the advancement of women. Nevertheless, gender remained a critical determinant in such areas as employment, economic status, wealth and the holding of public office. In addition to many deeply rooted barriers in society, women also faced new difficulties resulting from economic hardship.

25. New Zealand attached great importance to a strategic approach to bring about change. The approach adopted in the Forward-looking Strategies was an excellent one because it combined a practical orientation with a system of review and appraisal. It was clear from the Secretary-General's report (A/45/489) that there had been a loss of momentum and that the achievement of the objectives of the Strategies was at risk. The review had identified the major obstacles to women's equality and set out practical steps to overcome them. Those recommendations and conclusions provided a compelling agenda for action for the next few years and must be given the attention they deserved.

26. Statistics showed that the situation of women in New Zealand had generally improved. Women's life expectancy had increased and they made up half of university enrolments. Women's income relative to that of men had improved and there were fewer women among the underemployed. Nevertheless, much remained to be done and many potentially desirable developments had had only a minimal effect because of slow economic growth. Furthermore, while women were taking on more public responsibilities, there had not been a parallel reallocation of responsibilities within private households.

27. Her delegation set great store on the statistical work carried out by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). Taking account of the contribution by women in official statistics was an effective way of changing attitudes and policies. Her Government was undertaking a survey of how women in New Zealand spent their time in order to ensure that unpaid work was taken into consideration. The consequences of such recognition for future economic and social policies were potentially radical. The review and appraisal of the Nairobi Strategies had also underscored the importance of women's unpaid work. All Governments should take concrete steps to measure the

(Ms. Coombs, New Zealand)

economic value of such work with a view to taking it into account in national policies by 1995. New Zealand had identified primary areas on which it needed to focus for the next few years. The situation of Maori and Pacific Island women was of special concern.

28. Economic and political power was of vital importance to women. It was particularly disappointing that progress in promoting the economic equality of women had been so slow. In her country, the availability of high-quality support services for unpaid women was limited and their cost put them beyond the reach of many. Furthermore, the remaining barriers to quality education and training in New Zealand must be removed in order to ensure that women enjoyed the benefits of paid employment. In order to overcome the gap between women's and men's pay rates, her Government had just enacted legislation requiring all employers with 50 or more workers to set up equal employment opportunity programmes.

29. The interregional consultation on women in public life to take place in 1991 would potentially be of great importance and should be attended by representatives of all spheres of public life in order to ensure political participation in the very broadest sense. New Zealand looked forward to the world conference on women in 1995 and hoped that agreement would be reached on a venue which would give the conference the special character that had marked previous such conferences. The Commission on the Status of Women could make a recommendation in that regard.

30. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was another powerful force for change. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), however, faced serious obstacles which should be given careful consideration. The forthcoming tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention would be a good opportunity to consider ways of putting it on a more equal footing with the other human rights instruments. CEDAW had already done much to streamline and rationalize its methods of work. Her country particularly welcomed its recently established practice of holding pre-sessional working groups. That body must be given the staff and resources that it required. CEDAW had recently carried out important work on violence against women in the family and on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children - female circumcision, female infibulation and women and AIDS. Her delegation welcomed the attention given to such distressing practices affecting the rights of women and called on Member States to heed the recommendations that had been made.

31. Ms. PRINCE-AGBODJAN (Togo) said that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Forward-looking Strategies were inextricably linked and formed the basic foundations for the achievements of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: equality, development and peace. Those objectives could not be attained without co-ordinated efforts at the regional, national and international levels.

32. While awareness had grown regarding the importance of the role of women in development, progress towards achieving equality between men and women had been

(Ms. Prince-Agbodjan, Togo)

slow. It was therefore vital to take measures to overcome the obstacles to equality, which existed mainly at the national level. In that connection, the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies (A/45/489), by identifying groups of vulnerable women, provided an excellent basis for studying the variety of problems confronting women and for finding solutions. Her delegation wished to stress the importance and soundness of the report's conclusion that awareness of gender-based problems was the first stage in formulating policies to promote full integration of vulnerable groups of women in development.

33. In order that women might begin to emerge from their vulnerable situation, special attention should be paid to young women, handicapped women and female heads of household. Such efforts should be designed to ensure equal opportunities for girls and boys, so that young women could achieve stable lifestyles; to encourage the adoption of measures serving to integrate handicapped women in economic and social life; and to ensure the necessary material and financial support for female heads of households, so that they could meet their responsibilities. Such efforts would naturally benefit elderly women as well.

34. While efforts to increase the percentage of women working in the United Nations system were encouraging and should continue, her delegation was concerned by the very low proportion of African women in the Secretariat. Special emphasis should be placed on rectifying that situation.

35. According to the Secretary-General's report (A/45/489), the percentage of women elected to hold public office had declined dramatically over the past two years. It was therefore important to study ways in which women's participation in political life could be increased.

36. Her delegation welcomed the fact that development strategies were placing new emphasis on the integration of women in development. On the initiative of her Government, and backed by UNIFEM funding, meetings on strategies for the integration of women in development had been held in Togo in 1988 and 1989. Those meetings had made an important contribution to the formulation of development policies and strategies and to the establishment of bilateral and multilateral co-operation projects. A seminar on the relationship between the status of women and demographics in French-speaking Africa had been held in Togo in June 1990, resulting in a wider appreciation of the demographic aspect of national policies for the promotion of women.

37. The Togolese Government had made the participation of women in development a national priority. To that end, it had established the Union Nationale des Femmes as a way of bringing together various women's organizations. The women of Togo also held periodic political and civic training seminars and women's days.

38. Women and men in her country received equal pay for equal work. There were women in every political and administrative institution and in government service. In addition, a vast restructuring programme had been implemented to increase

(Ms. Prince-Agbodjan, Togo)

production by introducing new methods in the areas of agriculture, stock breeding and craft industries. Togolese women were also the main beneficiaries of the Government's adult literacy programme.

39. Togo had signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It had also revised its family code in an effort to achieve the Government's objective of promoting the rights of each member of the family.

40. Togo had created information centres to help women gain more awareness of their rights and responsibilties and of the role they could play in national policy-making. Public education programmes for women included discussions of the medical and social consequences of child-rearing and the repercussions of adolescent pregnancy. Computerized data systems for the collection and analysis of social statistics had been introduced in Togo.

41. Mr. MOK (Singapore) said that women's issues were part of the national agenda in Singapore and were the concern of all levels and sectors of society.

42. In recent years, important advances had been made in the struggle to gain equality for women and to eliminate sexual discrimination. However, while they enjoyed *de jure* rights in many areas, women were still subject to discrimination in practice. That was due both to women's lack of awareness of their rights and to legal and social barriers. It was therefore highly ironic that the United Nations should be the one place where change was most needed. The Secretary-General's report (A/45/548) painted a dismal picture of gender inequality in the Secretariat's system of recruitment and promotion. It was clear that further affirmative action was needed.

43. In his country, the right to vote had been granted simultaneously to men and women. Since that time, the Government had made efforts to promote the role of women in development. It advocated a policy of equal opportunity in all economic sectors and incorporated that policy in its planning and programmes. In 1961, the Government had enacted a Women's Charter, which sought to improve the status of women in matters relating to marriage, divorce and property rights. Those rights had become a part of the social values of his country. For example, in 1988 Singapore had signed the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Declaration on the Advancement of Women and in 1987, it had endorsed the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Women and Development.

44. His country had implemented a policy of equal educational opportunities for males and females, resulting in equal enrolment in elementary and secondary schools and an increase in the number of females in institutions of higher education. More women were also entering fields previously dominated by men, such as law and medicine.

45. Singapore's Employment Act prohibited discrimination in the recruitment, promotion and terms of employment of women. The new generation in Singapore had become accustomed to the idea of women working in positions of equal or superior

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(Mr. Mok, Singapore)

status to their male co-workers. Women and men received equal pay for equal work in both the public and private sectors. In addition, his Government had enacted special provisions to protect women in the workplace. The number of women in the work-force had increased steadily over the years, as had the number of women employed in administrative and managerial positions. Opportunities for upgrading skills or education were equally available to men and women.

46. The emancipation of women in politics had not been as rapid. Nevertheless, advances had been made in the past few years and were expected to continue. Singapore currently had four female Members of Parliament, out of a total of 81, and would soon have two female Ministers of State.

47. Changes in women's status and role had brought about changes in various social phenomena. The younger generation in particular was growing increasingly aware of the need for men to be more flexible and more realistic in the demands they placed on their spouses. Another important social phenomenon was the declining marriage and birth rate. As a small country, with people as its only natural resource, Singapore was concerned about that trend and was taking appropriate measures to enable women to raise children and still remain in the work-force.

48. Ms. Coombs (New Zealand) took the Chair.

49. Mrs. BARGHOUTI (Observer for Palestine) expressed her appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on the situation of Palestinian women in the occupied territories (E/CN.6/1990/10). She regretted, however, that the Israeli authorities had refused to allow a mission of experts to travel to occupied Palestine.

50. Although noting the role played by Palestinian women in engineering social change, the report also detailed the detrimental effects of the occupation on the Palestinian family. The authorities' policy of closing educational institutions, and thus denying Palestinians their right to education, was entirely incompatible with international principles. Expulsion and deportation, meanwhile, caused Palestinian families to be dispersed. Many Palestinian women had been killed, or had suffered miscarriages, in the course of their struggle for freedom and independence. Children too had been among those killed and wounded.

51. While Israel continued to tighten its iron grip, Palestinian women were struggling to end the occupation, playing a full part in decision-making through associations, unions and committees. They had set up committees to distribute foodstuffs and clothing to those suffering the effects of Israeli oppression, initiated literacy, hygiene and vocational training courses, and opened day-care centres for the children of working women. They were playing an ever greater role in trade unions but the lack of a national authority often made it impossible to meet workers' demands.

52. His delegation endorsed all the comments and suggestions contained in the Secretary-General's report and hoped that the international community would take due note of them. It also hoped that United Nations agencies would exert pressure

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(Mrs. Barghouti, Observer, Palestine)

on Israel with a view to alleviating the sufferings of the Palestinian people and noted that it would be impossible to fulfil the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Palestine until the occupation was ended and the Palestinian people was allowed to exercise its legitimate rights. In that context, attempts to examine the living conditions of women and children in Palestine should be maintained. In conclusion, his delegation called on women throughout the world to join in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies, in the light of its belief that a stable community free of all forms of oppression, discrimination and foreign domination could be achieved only if all helped each other to that end.

53. Ms. LISSIDINI (Uruguay) said that, despite the enormous advances of the twentieth century, women continued to be viewed in a stereotyped manner, which often limited them to family-oriented roles and ignored their real or potential contributions as agents of development. Such stereotyping was due in part to entrenched cultural prejudices.

54. In developing countries, women's role in development continued to be of particular significance. Women played a major role in the production, processing and sale of foodstuffs. At the same time, the fact that a growing number of women were heads of households forced them to seek supplementary income in the unstructured sector of the economy, making them easy targets for exploitation and discrimination. All that had led to the "feminization of poverty".

55. It was therefore imperative to provide support for poor women in developing countries. In that connection, UNIFEM's regional strategies represented a highly efficient approach. Her delegation also endorsed efforts by UNIFEM to offer women greater access to new technologies related to the food cycle and to assist women in launching private enterprises.

56. It was discouraging that many women were doubly vulnerable: first, because of their status as women and secondly because of their health condition, socio-economic standing or age. Education was fundamental to resolving that problem; from an early age, females should be made aware of their rights so that as adults they could actively claim those rights. Her delegation was in favour of educational programmes and seminars which dealt with the various obstacles facing women. Of particular interest in that connection was a meeting, to be held in Vienna in November 1990, which would examine and seek ways to eliminate the factors underlying the vulnerability of women.

57. Noteworthy in the field of public information was the production of radio programmes which focused on women's issues. United Nations broadcasts of that type played an important role in raising public awareness regarding discrimination against women. For that reason, it was particularly worrisome that such programmes were broadcast weekly in English but only once a month in other languages. To reach the widest possible audience, equal broadcast time should be provided for all the official languages of the United Nations.

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(Ms. Lissidini, Uruguay)

58. It was a matter of concern that, five years after the formulation of the Forward-looking Strategies, there were still so many obstacles to their implementation. Her delegation endorsed the conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women regarding the need to adopt measures to ensure equal access to education for women; to ensure equal pay for equal work; and to promote women's participation in leadership positions. The latter aspect would benefit greatly from the interregional consultation on women in public life to be held at Vienna in 1991. The world conference on women in 1995 would provide a forum for the consideration of progress to date and the formulation of approaches to overcoming the remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Strategies.

59. Her delegation welcomed the rise in the number of women employed and the increased opportunities for women to obtain higher-level posts in the United Nations Secretariat. Such a trend should be encouraged and, in that connection, she supported the request by the Econonic and Social Council that the Secretary-General should take the necessary measures to achieve by 1995 an overall participation rate for women of 35 per cent of the total number employed in the United Nations system. That target should in no way compromise the provisions of Article 101 c of the Charter, aimed at securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity within the Organization. The active participation of women in recent United Nations peace-keeping missions demonstrated their abilities to fulfil such tasks and should be encouraged in the future.

60. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was the human rights treaty with the broadest scope that had been elaborated with regard to women. For that reason, her Government urged those countries which had not yet done so to accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

61. Ms. Zindoga (Zimbabwe) resumed the Chair.

62. Mrs. EJIRI (Japan) said that her country was proud to be a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and that her delegation commended the efforts of CEDAW to ensure its implementation. It attached special importance to the dialogue between the Committee and the States parties and supported the idea of consolidated guidelines to help States parties to submit their reports more promptly.

63. Japan had made progress in ensuring de jure as well as de facto equality between men and women by providing equal employment opportunities that had resulted in an increase in the number of women in professional, managerial and technical occupations.

64. The Commission on the Status of Women had a central role to play in advancing the cause of women. Her delegation commended the Commission for the recommendations and conclusions it had adopted after a comprehensive review of progress and obstacles that remained to be overcome, but stressed that the implementation of those recommendations and conclusions depended upon the efforts of Member States. Her own country had given those recommendations and conclusions wide publicity in order to promote the advancement of women at home and abroad.

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(Mrs. Ejiri, Japan)

65. Her Government greatly appreciated the activities of UNIFEM in promoting women's participation in development and had increased its contribution to the Fund. It would also continue to provide technical co-operation, training and seminars designed to help women in developing countries.

66. Ms. JUNEJO (Pakistan) said that her delegation supported the steps recommended by the Commission on the Status of Women concerning the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. Meaningful progress in the implementation of the Strategies, however, could be achieved only in favourable socio-economic conditions. Underdevelopment, poverty, hunger and disease adversely affected the advancement of women in developing societies and required special emphasis. The integration of women in development was a global objective and depended heavily on international efforts. The first step should be to analyse existing international policies and procedures for assisting and co-ordinating national efforts. National machinery for integrating women in development must be strengthened in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategies.

67. In accordance with the precepts of Islam, which gave equal rights and status to men and women, the Constitution of Pakistan safeguarded the rights of women and provided protection to ensure their social, economic, legal and political status. One of the main functions of the Pakistan Ministry of Women's Development was to ensure that the interests and needs of women were adequately taken into account in public policy formulation by various government bodies. The Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women had the task of making recommendations to the Government to safeguard the rights of women. The Ministry of Women's Development followed up on those recommendations with the provincial governments and non-governmental organizations. In order to ensure the participation of women in national development, her Government had recently approved the formation of a federal women's police force to investigate women-related crimes and the establishment of legal-aid centres for needy women, a statistical information centre on women and community development centres in rural areas for women.

68. Among its tasks, the Ministry of Women's Development organized seminars on women and development, promoted the participation of women in international forums and supported non-governmental organizations and government institutions dealing with women's affairs. A recent ministerial meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation had put forward 20 recommendations on the question of women in development, which would improve the plight of women in the member countries.

69. Although Pakistan generally supported the objectives of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it was not in favour of attempts to use the Convention as an instrument for exerting pressure on developing countries, especially Islamic countries. Her Government attached particular importance to the question of women refugees and displaced women. Pakistan was faced with the formidable task of providing assistance to over 3 million refugees, most of whom were women, children and the aged. Despite its limited resources, her country was doing its best to care for those refugees as part of its humanitarian

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(Ms. Junejo, Pakistan)

duty, with the help of international organizations and friendly Governments. The international community must take steps to facilitate the voluntary return of the refugees to their homeland in safety and honour. In that connection, her delegation had taken note of the expert group meeting convened in July 1990 by the Division for the Advancement of Women with the co-operation of UNHCR and the financial support of UNIFEM. She hoped that similar meetings would adequately deal with the problems faced by women refugees in Pakistan. Lastly, she expressed her Government's appreciation for the wonderful work carried out by UNIFEM and INSTRAW in improving the status of women.

70. Miss ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia) said that her country supported United Nations efforts to promote the advancement of women, particularly through implementation of the Nairobi Strategies. It commended the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and its efforts to link the Nairobi Strategies with its social programmes and to streamline its agenda, especially by identifying priorities. Her delegation supported the Commission's recommendations annexed to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 and urged the General Assembly to adopt them.

71. Her Government encouraged the participation of women in all areas of social life, and equal rights for women were anchored in the country's legislation, which included specific women's rights provisions proposed by women's organizations. Much remained to be done, however, to ensure equality in practice, and that would be achieved through progress in social and economic development. There was now greater recognition in Mongolia of such previously neglected problems as working and living conditions, high maternal- and child-mortality rates, family problems, shortage of child-care facilities and disparities between the living standards of urban and rural women. Legislative action had already been taken to remedy those problems despite the country's difficult economic situation. In recognition of the importance of education and literacy in enabling women to participate in development, Mongolia had promoted access of women to higher education and had been the main sponsor of the International Literacy Year. With two thirds of the world's illiterates being women, her delegation also supported the draft resolution on women and literacy.

72. Her delegation endorsed the recommendation to hold a world conference on women in 1995 in order to keep the problem of women high on the international agenda. Her Government was proud to be one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and was grateful to CEDAW for its valuable ideas and recommendations expressed in conjunction with Mongolia's second periodic report. Her Government had decided to withdraw the reservations it had made upon accession to certain international legal instruments, including the Convention. She urged those countries that had not yet become parties to do so.

73. She commended the work of UNIFEM, whose recent mission to her country had established useful contacts with the organs responsible for women's issues in Mongolia. The steps projected by UNIFEM were commendably responsive to the country's national economic and social development needs and augured well for future co-operation between Mongolia and UNIFEM.

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74. Mrs. SIMHA (Israel) said that in a social climate that was changing all over the world, women were taking their destiny into their own hands. They demanded respect not because they were women but because of their essential contribution to society. Greater efforts must be made to acknowledge the achievements of women in all areas of social and cultural life in order to encourage them to overcome the obstacles to equality. One obstacle was underrepresentation in public life. They did not want to be elected to senior posts just because they were women, nor should they be. Their aspirations and ambitions were commensurate with their skills, qualifications and contributions. They wanted equal opportunity to participate in decision-making because their contribution was needed: the advancement of women was important to all humankind. She commended the measures adopted at the international and national levels in recent years to achieve legal equality between the sexes, but noted the need for vigilance in ensuring their implementation.

75. Certain groups of women required special attention. Young women suffered not only from sexual discrimination but also professional discrimination and career disruption because of motherhood, family responsibilities and unequally shared household duties. The years of professional advancement coincided with the years of marriage, child-bearing and building a family, which consumed far more of women's time than men's. Those obstacles must be minimized through day care and other facilities to enable young women to work outside the home. It was increasingly common for single women to become heads of households, and that also created a need for special benefits, such as shorter working hours for single parents, subsidized day care and household help.

76. The advancement of women was predicated upon their social and economic development, and special attention must be paid to the 40,000 children who died every year of malnutrition, preventable disease and adequate sanitation, as well as to the half-million mothers who died each year from causes related to childbirth. The rate of illiteracy among women was extremely high and its reduction was essential to promote the advancement of women. Better education for women must be accompanied by access to greater decision-making power so that they could utilize their skills and potential to help improve their own welfare. Another matter meriting special attention was family violence because it jeopardized not only the immediate victims but also society as a whole.

77. Lastly, she fully agreed about the importance of consultation of women in public life and that such consultation must include senior women officials from government, political parties, unions and non-governmental organizations, as well as parliamentarians and those responsible for women's affairs.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE
22nd meeting
held on
Monday, 29 October 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

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# SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

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AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (*continued*)

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A/C.3/45/SR.22
9 November 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (A/45/3, A/45/38, A/45/426, A/45/202, A/45/222, A/45/225, A/45/230, A/45/254, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/269, A/45/270; A/C.3/45/5) (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (A/45/3, A/45/347, A/45/489, A/45/548; A/C.3/45/5) (continued)

1. Mr. NKENGURUTSE (Burundi) said that improving the status of women was a major concern in his country. In the developing world, women worked long hours to ensure the production, processing and marketing of from 50 to 80 per cent of foodstuffs. His delegation joined in supporting the efforts that had been made to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000. While certain economic and political obstacles remained, it was convinced that they could be overcome. It was pleased to note the growing number of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which indicated a new awareness among States and a real desire to promote the development of women. The Government of Burundi was about to begin the procedures necessary for the ratification of the Convention.

2. Women were central to development and had always played an important role in the social, economic and cultural life of his country. Government policies now focused on integrating women into the process of development in such a way as to promote the well-being not only of women but of the family in general. An information and training programme had been set up to meet women's real needs. While it emphasized women's daily activities, the importance of paid employment was also recognized, and, in view of the difficulty of combining family and professional obligations, women were being encouraged to participate in family planning.

3. Because of the mother's central role in the education of her children, she should receive training to help her to contribute more effectively in transmitting the nation's cultural heritage to its youth. Also, mother and infant care were considered particularly important, and mothers were expected to play a major part in preventing illness and improving health conditions.

4. While realistic, the programme was limited by financial constraints. In that connection, he wished to thank the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for the assistance that it had given and continued to give his country. His delegation supported the efforts of UNIFEM throughout the world and encouraged it to continue. It also welcomed the idea of holding a world conference on women in 1995, which it hoped would be able to identify the obstacles to the advancement of women, as well as the possible means of overcoming them.

5. Mrs. HADDAD (Lebanon) said that, contrary to appearances, women were still struggling to achieve relative independence in every aspect of public life. As the years passed, there was more realism about the time and effort required to bring

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(Mrs. Haddad, Lebanon)

about equality, development and improvement in the status of women. After briefly reviewing some of the major goals set by the Forward-looking Strategies, she commended the efforts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which had been greatly enhanced by the co-operation of countries in submitting regular reports on the status of women in their societies.

6. While many women in her country were well-educated, they were traditionally identified primarily with subsidiary roles, and their chances for economic and political advancement were limited. Their most important duty was their dedication to their children and family. The effect of the long and costly war there had been particularly devastating for women, especially for those who had lost their husbands or fathers, who had been their financial mainstay. Moreover, of the many refugees within the country, the principal victims were women and children. As a result of the war, the social infrastructure had undergone enormous changes, and a new social order had emerged in which the status of women was ill-defined and needed to be addressed.

7. She wished to conclude by conveying the message of hope and peace of her Government, which was eagerly seeking to reactivate the country's institutions. Comprehensive action would be required to address the needs of women. The ongoing efforts of the numerous women's organizations in her country were highly appreciated and encouraged and, at that crucial stage, of paramount importance. Her country hoped to benefit in the near future from the guidance, recommendations and help provided by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other United Nations organs, as well as by non-governmental organizations and specialized agencies involved in that field.

8. Mrs. GEBRE-EGZIABHER (Ethiopia) said that her delegation was dismayed that, in its review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the Commission on the Status of Women had been forced to conclude that the objectives of the Strategies were at risk. It also fully shared the concerns expressed by Mrs. Sellami-Meslem in her introductory statement. In Ethiopia, as in many developing countries, the lack of progress was basically due to social and economic problems. She hoped that, for the sake of women, the declarations adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would help to alleviate such problems.

9. In view of the obstacles encountered, careful scrutiny of the problems involved and increased efforts were required. Thus, her delegation welcomed the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women, as adopted by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1990/15. It believed that the interregional consultation on women in public life to be held at Vienna in September 1991 would make an important contribution and hoped that the world conference on women in 1995 would lead to concrete actions and better results.

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(Mrs. Gebre-Egziabher, Ethiopia)

10. The priority themes to be considered by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session were important. Of all the categories of vulnerable women, her country was focusing the greatest attention on the problems of young women, since young people constituted 40 per cent of its population. In addition, as host to over 800,000 refugees from neighbouring countries, it was particularly concerned by the situation of displaced women and children, who constituted the majority of the refugees, and it would continue to co-operate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in that area. With regard to machinery for the integration of women in the development process, experience in her country had shown that national machineries, such as its Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association, could play a catalytic role.

11. She commended both the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and UNIFEM for their effective contributions. Since women constituted 50 per cent of the farm labour force in her country, it applauded the decision of UNIFEM to accord top priority to food and agriculture. She hoped that Ethiopia's fruitful partnership with that body would continue in the future.

12. Lastly, she noted the efforts being made in the United Nations Secretariat to increase to 30 per cent the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution by the end of December 1990. It was important that those efforts should continue until the equal representation of women in the United Nations system had been achieved.

13. Mrs. AHMAD (Brunei Darussalam) said that, despite the United Nations Decade for Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, women's development continued to lag, mostly as a result of economic conditions in the developing world. Women were inevitably the first casualties of economic crises, since their contribution and economic involvement were deemed less essential. The relationship between the advancement of women and a country's economic status strongly suggested that it would be difficult to implement the Nairobi Strategies without first improving the international economic situation.

14. Nevertheless, women had become more aware of their legal rights and their potential to contribute to the socio-economic development of their countries. The respective Governments should be commended for their efforts to enable women to realize their full potential through education and information. The countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations were also working towards that goal and had signed a declaration on the advancement of women in that region in July 1988.

15. Because the Government of her country was deeply concerned by its limited human resources, it accorded great importance to the contribution of women. Its policy of encouraging women to take advantage of free education had improved the literacy rate among women and had increased their participation in various decision-making processes. Equal opportunity, equal pay, various incentives and a 56-day paid maternity leave had encouraged women to join the work force. Yet care was being taken not to undermine the traditional role of wife and mother in an Islamic society. To achieve all those goals, the Government had instituted the Women's Unit within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in 1987.

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16. However, the gap between theory and reality in the advancement of women should be addressed not only at the national level but at the international level as well. Her country looked forward to the review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

17. Mr. WARADI (Fiji) said that there had been little progress to date in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The thrust of the Strategies urgently needed to be reviewed and reoriented to reflect better national, regional and international objectives and aspirations. His delegation would welcome a decision to hold a world conference on women in 1995, and it applauded the offer of the Austrian Government to host such a conference.

18. In 1987, the Government of Fiji had established the Ministry for Women and Culture in order to bring under a single administrative umbrella the machinery needed to formulate and implement policies and programmes for the welfare of women. His country, like its island neighbours, was in a state of transition from a traditional close-knit society to a social structure that tended towards the nuclear family. Women would play a central role in that transition. One of the Ministry's main objectives was to help women to combine the best features of traditional and modern society. Women were encouraged to develop their skills, expand their education and raise the level of their social and political visibility, and programmes had been implemented to bring them into the social and economic decision-making process. Mechanisms were also being established to monitor the progress of women's programmes, review national policy and institute changes as necessary.

19. The Division for the Advancement of Women was organizing a commemorative seminar for the countries of the South Pacific on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Scheduled for March 1991, it came at a most opportune time in the region's development. The provision of common indicators for the status of the region's women and the collection and dissemination of statistical data on that subject would facilitate the achievement of the United Nations objectives.

20. His delegation wished to echo the concern of the representative of New Zealand regarding the unequal status of women in the Secretariat. In order to achieve the principles advocated in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, the equal participation of women in the Secretariat on an equitable regional basis was urgently needed.

21. Ms. PEREZ de PLANCHART (Venezuela) said the struggle for the equality of women presented a difficult challenge which could not be met without the support provided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. It was gratifying to think that 104 States were parties to the Convention and that the Strategies had just been reviewed and appraised with interesting results.

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(Ms. Perez de Planchart, Venezuela)

22. Although her Government had been putting together a number of policies designed to guarantee the participation of women in all walks of national life, obstacles still existed to their progress towards that goal. The political will of her Government to design programmes and activities to meet the needs and aspirations of Venezuelan women could be perceived in terms of the incorporation of concrete proposals in support of women in the eighth National Development Plan. The 1990s offered the women of Venezuela different prospects for achieving the objectives of equality and development, which called for the establishment of a permanent regulatory body to identify, co-ordinate and follow up on action to generate opportunities for women. The National Council on Women established the preceding year to guarantee the full participation of women at national level was such a body and would be responsible for organizing a national network of women's bureaux to strengthen the implementation of the Plan. At legislative level, the Bicameral Commission on Women's Questions had submitted a draft law on equal opportunities for women to the President of the Republic. The draft also provided for the creation of new legal bodies and for the reform of all laws relating to working women. Preparations were being made to hold the second Venezuelan Congress on Women in 1991. Such programmes represented the efforts made by her Government to fulfil the goals of the Nairobi Strategies.

23. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) descrcibed the efforts made to ensure that women occupied 30 per cent of the posts subject to geographical distribution by the end of 1990. Although that goal had still not been reached in July 1990, the increase recorded in the female component of the Secretariat staff was still highly significant. Her delegation felt that the measures taken to overcome the lag should be strengthened and it supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/3, in which a new goal of 35 per cent was established for 1995.

24. Her delegation had read with interest the report contained in document A/45/347 on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and was pleased to note the progress made by the Fund. It recognized that the training of women in non-traditional sectors in different regions had produced benefits in terms of raising the status of women and giving them access to new opportunities for work. It supported the idea that the consolidation of the experience achieved should be an immediate goal of the Fund.

25. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (A/45/489), she said her delegation was concerned at the conclusion reached by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fourth session that adverse economic and political factors continued to stand in the way of the advancement of women. Her delegation supported the implementation of the measures recommended by the Commission as a solution to that problem.

26. Her delegation attached great importance to the subject of women and the environment and hoped it would be incorporated into the priority issues to be considered by the Commission in 1992 under the theme of development. It also

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(Ms. Perez de Planchart, Venezuela)

supported the holding of a world conference on women in 1995 for the purpose of conducting a second review and appraisal of the Nairobi Strategies and the idea of convening a high-level interregional consultation on women in public life. Such a consultation had special significance for Venezuela since women made a substantial contribution to the public life of the country. The delegation of Venezuela also attached great importance to the updating of the world survey on the role of women in development in time for consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in 1994.

27. Ms. LUHULIMA (Indonesia) said that the number of signatories of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was indicative of the importance attached to equal rights for women and that in its examination of country reports, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had greatly helped to overcome obstacles to the implementation of the Convention. Her delegation took note of the new consolidated guidelines governing initial reports and welcomed the efforts of the Committee to rationalize its procedures by, for example, holding working groups before each session.

28. In Indonesia the Convention had been ratified in June 1984 and had entered into force a month later; however, the principle of equality between men and women was enshrined in the country's Constitution adopted in 1945 and in many regulations and legislative acts. The Department of Justice had initiated a campaign to foster awareness of the equality of men and women before the law.

29. With regard to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, it was unfortunate that the realization of *de facto* equality lagged behind the attainment of *de jure* equality for women. She commended the Commission on the Status of Women for its thoroughness in conducting the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Strategies and for its conclusions and recommendations, which were reflected in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15. Her delegation supported the recommendation made by the Commission that a world conference on women should be held in 1995 and drew attention to paragraphs 64-67 of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Strategies (A/45/489), in which activities related to the conference were outlined. It felt, however, that careful thought at a regional level should be given to the venue of the conference. It was encouraged by the improvements registered in the report of the Secretary-General on the status of women in the Secretariat, noting that the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had increased significantly over the previous year.

30. With regard to Indonesia's experience in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, she reported that one of the major achievements had been the inclusion of a special chapter on the role of women in nation-building in the country's Broad Guidelines of State Policy. The enhancement of the role of women in development had always been central to the country's development efforts. Development programmes for women were primarily targeted to women in low income groups, women living in isolated areas, women heads of household and young women. As part of a holistic strategy comprising five broad programmes, each of which

(Ms. Luhulima, Indonesia)

consisted in various projects and activities carried out by the Government, NGOs and the community at large, efforts were being made to enable women to participate in and benefit from development. Attention was being focused on the strengthening of the policy-formulation and programme-planning capacity of the national machineries for the advancement of women, and co-operation between the Government and NGOs had led to success in that area.

31. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Administrator of UNDP on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (A/45/347) and found it encouraging that the resources of the Fund would be used in innovative activities. It had read with interest that section of the report which dealt with the Asia and Pacific region and was particularly interested in the four points of intervention identified in paragraph 19. It welcomed the efforts being made by UNIFEM to enhance its management capacity in an attempt to increase its impact on women in the 1990s. She stressed the importance of education for preparing women to become equal partners with men in all spheres of life and said that, in line with the goals of International Literacy Year, Indonesia was deeply committed to eradicating illiteracy and to providing both men and women with the education and skills they needed to reach their full potential.

32. Mrs. ARUNGU-OLENDE (Kenya), referring to the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its thirty-fourth session (E/1990/25), said that development was currently being rethought in terms of human development and programmes were built in partnership with a country's people, half of whom were women. If planners were to know how to include women in those programmes, national machineries for women needed to be strengthened. In the case of Kenya, substantial progress had been made in instituting the measures called for in the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, with the result that the remaining obstacles and constraints could now be identified more rapidly.

33. Much, however, remained to be done in such areas as agricultural production, where difficulties encountered by women in gaining access to new technologies still constituted an obstacle, and elective politics, although in that area she noted that the country's umbrella women's organization was now affiliated to its ruling party. If that link were skillfully used, it could mark the beginning of a promising political future for the women of Kenya. Indeed, the signs of progress in that direction had already been observed, and it was hoped that once women had attained high decision-making levels, they themselves would help to break down existing barriers in other occupations and professions.

34. The international community should endeavour to promote adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women since its implementation was a sure way of achieving the advancement of women and would also greatly facilitate the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She noted the two General Recommendations contained in paragraph 438 of the report on the ninth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38) and said, in connection with General Recommendation No. 15, that her country had been implementing strategies for the prevention and control of

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(Mrs. Arungu-Olende, Kenya)

acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). The problem of abused women was another social issue which needed to be confronted in all parts of the world through the adoption of long-term strategies to assist its victims. Kenya supported all organizations and institutions which were working with Governments to curb and reduce violence against women.

35. Because women needed to be given more opportunities to develop their abilities and to participate equally in the planning and implementation of development plans and programmes, her delegation welcomed the work being done by UNIFEM whose innovative and catalytic roles involved the taking of risks, both for the Fund and for the women benefiting from it, in that some ventures would succeed while others failed. Nevertheless, disadvantaged women everywhere required assistance, and incidents of failure should be taken as lessons for the future.

36. Mrs. BIRAUD (France) said the first five years of implementation of the Nairobi Strategies faithfully reflected the fact that the history of women was bound up in the advances towards and retreats away from the goal of equality. In considering the rather unsatisfactory results obtained, however, the main emphasis should be on the positive struggle waged by women and men to accelerate the implementation of the Strategies, and the recommendations which had emerged from the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women should be used to keep the multitudinous problems which had arisen from increasing.

37. Her delegation rejoiced at the progress being made in the realm of equality under law but cautioned that women's rights constituted a fragile issue which could always be reopened. A law was good for nothing if it was not applied, and for that reason decentralized centres for information on women had been created. There was a need for more opinion-gathering campaigns to ensure that women's rights were given priority at the economic, political and social levels. For that reason, her delegation thought that a world conference on women in 1995 would serve a useful purpose. Although all the recommendations proposed by the Commission on the Status of Women in connection with the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies were important in their own right, nothing could be done until women acquired access to improved health services, education and vocational training. With regard to health, her delegation regarded the initiatives taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women as excellent and felt that they should be continued. In connection with problems relating to AIDS as they affected mothers and children, she reported that France had organized many conferences at which recommendations for action at the national and international levels had been proposed.

38. The problem of employment would become worse unless speedy action was taken by the international community. Since industry and services would be requiring qualified personnel, great attention needed to be given to scientific and technological training for women if they were not to remain the main component of an unskilled, underpaid and unemployed labour force. It should not be forgotten that women had always been able to adapt to a changing society and that no country would have been able to implement an industrialization policy without mobilizing

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(Mrs. Biraud, France)

women into their labour force. It was high time that society began to consider the possibility of adapting to the needs of women in such areas as the distribution of labour both at home and at work.

39. It was very appropriate that the issue of the environment had been touched upon in one of the recommendations put forward by the Commission on the Status of Women since the consequences of environmental deterioration had been such as to relegate poor women to an environment which was increasingly unfavourable to the tasks they were called upon to perform, with the result that their economic situation had suffered.

40. The fact that the Commission on the Status of Women had been able to accomplish a tremendous amount of work at its thirty-fourth session had been due to the preparations made by the Division for the Advancement of Women in holding seminars and submitting reports which had been indispensable to the success of the session. The forthcoming seminar on vulnerable women showed that the contribution made by the Division was continuing. With regard to the issue of women and political decision-taking, she said the virtual absence of women from politics was a mistake which should be quickly corrected since the presence of women in the political life of countries was bound to ensure that the problems of society were dealt with more effectively since women's participation in daily life enabled them to understand the real problems facing the people of a country. With regard to UNIFEM, she said her Government attached enormous importance to the action it was taking to promote human development and had increased its contribution to the Fund.

41. Mrs. KODIKARA (Philippines) said the Philippines, as a matter of State policy, was deeply committed to the promotion of the rights of women and that she personally had participated in the drafting of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. As a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, her country had also helped to monitor the progress made by the States parties under the Convention. In accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 44/73, her delegation believed that the States parties to the Convention should report on their achievements in implementing it and the obstacles they encountered on a continuing basis.

42. With regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, she noted that the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women had said that, if the same rate of progress were maintained, the chances of achieving the goals set at Nairobi by the year 2000 would be nil. The delegation of the Philippines attached great importance to that negative indicator but felt that the obstacles could be overcome. The area where the greatest progress had been achieved had been in the promulgation of laws which fostered equality but such laws could not eliminate existing forms of discrimination unless women became aware of the legal rights bestowed on them by those laws. There was such a thing as legal illiteracy, which needed to be eradicated.

43. Her country was looking forward to the interregional consultation on women in public life to be held in Vienna in September 1991 and felt that participation at

(Mrs. Kodikara, Philippines)

that consultation should be drawn from women engaged at the highest level of decision-making. With regard to the problem of vulnerable women, she said that the Philippines, as an exporter of human resources, attached the greatest importance to women migrants and hoped that the final draft of the International Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and their Families would include provisions relating to Women. With regard to the recommendation made by the Commission on the Status of Women that the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade shall identify strategies for ensuring that women's needs and contributions to the development process were reflected in all aspects of the Strategy, she said that the inclusion of women in the Strategy would result in their involvement in country projects executed by UNIDO, FAO, UNEP and other bodies in the United Nations system.

44. The frequency of the world survey on the role of women in development should be given careful consideration in order to ensure cost effectiveness. National surveys should be encouraged and the results should be made available for use by the United Nations. Her delegation looked forward to the holding of the world conference on women in 1995 as an occasion to renew efforts to achieve the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies. It was hoped that by then the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women would be ratified by all States.

45. With regard to the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, her delegation noted with great concern that most of the recommendations by the Steering Committee had not yet been fully implemented. She therefore urged their full implementation, particularly at the higher and decision-making levels and stressed the need to enhance career opportunities. The Focal Point for Women should give careful consideration to the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/548) and other relevant documents to find ways to implement those recommendations. In that connection, she felt that a note containing a list of vacancies and requirements should be sent to all missions to help them to put forward candidates. The Philippines stressed the need for a more meaningful programme of action to improve the status of women in the Secretariat and thought that a draft resolution to that end should be submitted for adoption by consensus.

46. It was gratifying to note that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had undertaken programmes to integrate women at grass-roots level of development. The Asia and Pacific Development Strategy (APDEV) would enhance the participation of women in the sectors of agriculture, environment and industry and the Philippines looked forward to further participation in those areas. In her country, UNIFEM had provided support for the training and employment of women in export-oriented industries and financial and technical assistance for the formulation of the Philippines' first development plan for women. Non-governmental organizations and women's groups from all over the country had participated in formulating the plan. Her country also appreciated the opportunity provided by UNIFEM to share its experience in that regard with the Government of Gambia and looked forward to further such co-operation in the future.

(Mrs. Kodikara, Philippines)

47. UNIFEM had also been supporting the work of non-governmental organizations in Philippine rural commmunities and had played a significant role in the development of models that could be shared between programmes and among countries. That unique role in the development process should be further encouraged and UNIFEM should consider the possibility of using the expertise of United Nations development agencies as projects expanded. UNIFEM was indeed spearheading efforts to promote the advancement of women in developing countries. Nevertheless, women should seek to achieve collective self-reliance and use indigenous human and material resources and private entrepreneurship to achieve their objectives.

48. Mr. KASOULIDES (Cyprus) said that, although indisputable progress had been achieved in ensuring equal rights for women and their full participation in the development process, much more remained to be done. Discriminatory legislation and practices still existed in many countries. Member States should redouble their efforts to enable women to play their multiple role in a more equitable society.

49. Cyprus had always attached great importance to international efforts to achieve complete equality of men and women and eliminate all discrimination against women. In that connection, he stressed the need for adequate infrastructures and support systems to enable women to become an integral part of development. Education was an essential means for eliminating the inequality and prejudice impeding the advancement of women.

50. His country's national plan of action on the status of women included programmes and projects for promoting the full participation of women in political, economic, cultural and social life. National machinery consisting of the secretariat for women's rights and a committee of representatives of all ministries had been set up to implement and co-ordinate Government policy in that field. The full participation of women on an equal basis in political life and the decision-making process was one of the main goals of his Government. Since its accession to independence in 1960, Cyprus had ratified a number of international conventions aimed at ensuring equality of rights between men and women. His country fully supported the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and called for the adoption of effective measures in that regard, including the establishment of national machinery to promote the advancement of women.

51. Mrs. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that in spite of the progress achieved in recent years in promoting the advancement of women, much more had to be done. Her delegation noted with concern the conclusion reached by the Commission on the Status of Women that the rate of progress in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies had slowed down and stressed the need for concerted action to overcome that negative trend. The recommendations put forward by the Commission provided the necessary guidelines for intensifying efforts to ensure true equality for women.

52. Her delegation noted the important contribution to the implemention of the Strategies made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against

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Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Division for the Advancement of Women. She attached great importance to the world conference on women in 1995, which would give further impetus to efforts to eliminate discrimination against women, particularly at the regional and national level. By focusing on specific results, conducting careful preparatory work and taking account of the interests of all regional groups, it would be possible to make best use of the limited resources available.

53. Universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would strengthen the legal basis for international co-operation in the humanitarian field in general. The report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38) demonstrated the useful work carried out by that body to promote true equality for women. In spite of the positive changes taking place in the world and increased international co-operation in tackling economic, social and humanitarian problems, the situation of women was at times rather sombre. Women continued to be subjected to discrimination and violence and were the first to suffer from poverty and hunger. The lack of participation by women in political activities, particularly at the decision-making level, remained an acute problem. In many countries, there were practically no women among the leaders of trade unions and political parties. It was hoped that the interregional consultation on women in public life, to be held in September 1991, would give further impetus to action aimed at correcting that situation. Her Government supported the holding of the International Year of the Family in 1994 and hoped that the preparations for the Year would take due account of the urgent problems in that essential area of human relations.

54. There was a need for further scientific research and a better system of gathering information on the situation of women and efforts to promote equality of the sexes. Today the Soviet Union openly discussed its problems in ensuring equality of women and the major shortcomings in the social protection that it provided to women. The difficult economic situation in the country, problems relating to maternal and child health care and the employment of women in difficult and hazardous jobs were among the hardships faced by women. Although very much had to be done, a start had been made. National machinery to promote the advancement of women had been established. The USSR Supreme Soviet had defined urgent measures to improve the situation of women through increased assistance and paid maternity leave and improved working conditions. It was now a question of ensuring that the new structures and machinery functioned effectively.

55. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados), said that his country attached great importance to the elimination of discrimination against women. The Constitution of Barbados guaranteed fundamental rights and freedoms for all, irrespective of sex. In 1976, his Government had established a bureau of women's affairs to address all issues directly concerning women and, in particular, to ensure observance of the principle of equality between men and women. The bureau worked closely with 44 non-governmental women's organizations and several labour organizations in order to eliminate discrimination against women. As in many other countries, there was not a high percentage of women participating in leadership roles or the

(Mr. Blackman, Barbados)

decision-making process in Barbados. Although there were women at the decision-making level in the public service, there were no women Permanent Secretaries. The highest political office in the country, that of Governor-General, was held, however, by a woman.

56. It was discouraging to note that the Commission on the Status of Women had concluded that, although some progress continued to be made, a combination of economic and political factors had slowed the rate of progress sufficiently to place the achievement of the objectives agreed upon at Nairobi at risk. A greater effort must be made to focus on the other disadvantaged groups, such as women engaged in grass-roots activities, those who were victims of violence, women affected by AIDS and women migrant workers. He commended UNIFEM for its projects to benefit poor rural women and its work in the Caribbean under the Participatory Action Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PAPLAC). It was hoped that UNIFEM would soon be able to expand its role in the English-speaking Caribbean by giving consideration to the high incidence of teenage pregnancies, which was of great concern to the Governments of the region.

57. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) must be provided with the necessary funding, staff and facilities to ensure its effective functioning. His delegation commended CEDAW for adopting general recommendation No. 15 (ninth session, 1990) on avoidance of discrimination against women in national strategies for the prevention and control of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). That recommendation would be instrumental in combating the AIDS pandemic, which was the leading killer of women in some societies.

58. Despite the setbacks in some areas in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies, much useful work had been carried out by the Commission on the Status of Women, UNIFEM, the Division for the Advancement of Women, CEDAW and the Economic and Social Council. His Government was particularly interested in the conclusions to be reached at the Commission's thirty-fifth session on the priority themes of equality, development and peace. Barbados strongly supported the recommendation by the Commission that the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade should identify strategies for ensuring that women's needs and contribution to the development process were reflected in all aspects of the international development strategy. Lastly, while it should be recognized that each society would implement the Strategies at its own phase and in accordance with available resources, all countries should reaffirm their commitment to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

59. The CHAIRMAN said that he wished to welcome Liechtenstein as a new Member of the United Nations.

60. Mrs. FRITSCHE (Liechtenstein) said that her Government attached great importance to the issues under consideration by the Third Committee, which needed to be approached at both the national and international level.

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(Mrs. Fritsche, Liechtenstein)

61. Women in Liechtenstein had not gained the right to vote or to be elected to national office until 1984. There were currently several women represented in the communal bodies and one female Member of Parliament.

62. In 1986, the Government had set up a committee on equality between men and women. Although limited to an advisory capacity, the committee commented on all draft legislation pertaining to equality issues; organized public information campaigns; and suggested changes in existing laws. At the committee's request, her Government was currently considering the incorporation of the principle of equal rights into the national Constitution as well as measures to give practical effect to that principle. Furthermore, family law was to be revised in order to reflect the principle of equality between the sexes. The committee has also called for the establishment of a governmental body to deal exclusively with equality issues. Lastly, her Government was currently examining the possibility of becoming a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

63. Zonta International, an international service club for women, had been founded in her country in 1985 and since that time had provided financial support to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Liechtenstein supported UNIFEM's commitment to innovative activities of direct benefit to women, tailored to national and regional needs.

64. Her Government had participated since 1978 in the Council of Europe's Committee on Equality between Men and Women. It attached great importance to interantional meetings, which provided a forum for the adoption of common positions on equality issues. In that connection, it welcomed the offer of the Austrian Government to host the 1995 world conference on women. Austria's commitment to promoting the cause of women was well-known and she wished to pay tribute to the Austrian Government for its achievements in that field.

65. Her Government was firmly convinced that the course of world peace called for the full participation of women in all areas of human endeavour, on equal terms with men. It looked forward to being part of the Third Committee, whose work would in turn inspire efforts aimed at eliminating the remaining inequalities between men and women in her country.

66. Ms. LLUPO (Albania) said that, having themselves been subject to extreme conditions of exploitation and discrimination, Albanian women were in a position to understand and support women everywhere who were fighting to end oppression and violence and to gain political and social emancipation. The women of her country fully supported the activities of the United Nations system aimed at assisting women in achieving those goals.

67. The progress of women's emancipation in Albania was directly related to its rate of social development and democratization. Freed from political and economic oppression, women were on an equal level with men with regard to participation in production, salaries, social security benefits and education. They played an

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(Ms. Llupo, Albania)

active role in the overall social and political life of the country, constituting 30 per cent of the membership of the People's Assembly, 40 per cent of the membership of the Supreme Court and nearly 50 per cent of the work-force. Many women were currently managing production sectors or receiving university training in specialized fields.

68. Her Government was devoting special attention to the education of women. The number of women attending higher educational institutions was steadily increasing. Jobs were guaranteed to graduates of secondary and higher educational institutions.

69. Women had the special responsibility of bringing up and educating the next generation. The State had therefore adopted specific measures to support women in their role as mothers, thus ensuring a high rate of population growth. Among those measures were a free health care system, paid maternity leave for working mothers, and a comprehensive system of child-care centres. The emancipation of the Albanian woman was an integral part of the emancipation of the society as a whole and had nothing in common with feminist movements. The goal was to achieve equal rights for men and women, with both groups working together towards that end.

70. Through their participation in the production sector and in political life and as educators of the young, Albanian women were contributing to the widely supported trend in that country towards democratization. It was clear that democracy meant greater participation of women in the political sphere. In that connection, under recent draft legislation, the Albanian Women's Union would be represented in the next elections as an independent political organization.

71. Ms. MBELLA (Cameroon) said that her Government continued to consider the Forward-looking Strategies as the springboard for national and international action to promote the role of women in development. In drafting its five-year plans for economic and social development, it was taking increasing account of the fact that women, rather than being a vulnerable group, represented a major force in society. Thus, the President of Cameroon had authorized the establishment of a commission for the promotion of women, composed of women from all sectors of society, to advise the Minister of Social Affairs on matters relating to women. The commission's objectives were: to encourage the establishment of literacy and civic training programmes for women; to extend training opportunities to women; to promote measures designed to increase women's opportunities for employment and their participation in policy-making; and to promote quality of rights between men and women.

72. In an effort to make legislation concerning the rights of association and freedom of movement more equitable, her Government had recently accorded to women extensive travel rights, abrogating previous regulations requiring a woman to carry a travel authorization from her spouse.

73. Her Government was seeking to integrate women more fully into the development process. To that end, it had been concentrating on three major aspects: rural development assistance, with particular emphasis on women working in the informal

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(Ms. Mbella, Cameroon)

sector, a group which accounted for more than 60 per cent of the country's agro-industrial production; improved communications between decision-makers and population at the grass-roots level; and the negative impact of the economic crisis of the 1980s on the advancement of women. With respect to the latter aspect, there was strong evidence that women from the developing countries, in particular the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, had been the hardest hit. According to statistics from the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), women had suffered the most from the consequences of the recent economic crisis, giving rise to the phenomenon known as the "feminization of poverty".

74. The situation was made more dramatic for African women since their cause was increasingly overshadowed by the widespread negative social consequences of the external debt crisis, which spared neither men nor women nor children. Efforts had to be directed at resolving that situation, so that both women and men could begin to make an effective contribution to the economic life of their countries. Thus, in the opinion of her Government, development for women did not mean the implementation of stringent economic policies in the informal sector; rather, it meant finding ways to provide women with incentives to enable them to function as agents of national growth and economic expansion. It was on the basis of that viewpoint that Cameroon would participate in the preparations for the 1995 world conference on women, which it agreed should be based on the principle of regional rotation, and would work co-operatively with international organizations for women.

75. Her Government wished to express its appreciation to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for its important role in supporting innovative activities which directly benefited women and were developed in accordance with national and regional priorities. The fact that contributions to the Fund were on the increase should allow it to intensify its traditional role of providing support for women's programmes and monitoring the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

76. The Cameroonian Government, which had at one time, been represented on INSTRAW's Board of Trustees, continued to follow with interest the work of that agency, in particular the provision of statistical data regarding women. INSTRAW was to be commended for providing data concerning women's activities in the informal sector, information which, while of great significance, had previously been unavailable for use in economic development planning. Other INSTRAW activities of special interest to her delegation were a plan to hold the first meeting of experts designed to examine ways to reflect the dual-sector economy in development planning; research on increasing women's access to credit; and the collection of statistical data on aging, which her Government could use to help women cope more effectively with the aging process.

77. Her delegation welcomed the proposals by the Commission on the Status of Women and by the Secretary-General setting the target of 35 per cent representation of women in high-level Secretariat posts by 1995. At the same time, it was concerned by certain statistical trends, which indicated that advances towards the target goal were not being made rapidly enough. In particular, there seemed to be a

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certain delay in recruiting women from developing countries. Her Government was in general agreement with the Secretary-General's proposal that Governments should inform the Secretariat of the existence of qualified female candidates. It hoped that the Secretary-General would follow through with his recommendation of a 1 per cent yearly increase in the hiring of women, after the 35 per cent target had been reached. It also endorsed the recommendations of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat in addition to the other recommendations contained in the annex to the Secretary-General's report (A/45/548). Lastly, the Focal Points in the permanent missions should continue to keep Governments informed of developments in the Secretariat regarding the recruitment of women.

78. Mr. MATELA (Poland) said that, while significant progress had been made in promoting the advancement of women, their potential for active participation in society had not yet been fully realized. Two issues appeared to have the most relevance to the attainment of such a goal: women in situations of economic crisis and the participation of women in political life.

79. In the countries concerned, ways must be found to minimize the negative impact of the economic crisis on women since, as both mothers and workers, they were in a more vulnerable position than men. Structural adjustment programmes should be designed to promote the full participation of women in the development process. That objective was particularly relevant to Poland. As it moved from a centrally planned to a free-market economy, the Government was attempting to adopt measures to protect its citizens, and women in particular, from the inevitable disruptive consequences of such a profound economic and political change. To that end, it had developed a system of local employment services to provide vocational orientation and guidance; a labour fund had been established to cover unemployment costs; and the development of local initiatives was being encouraged.

80. Political changes in his country had resulted in the establishment of numerous political and social organizations, including several women's organizations. Some political parties and trade unions were setting up special women's sections. Female deputies in the Parliament were participating more actively than they had in the past.

81. The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Women's Affairs, guided by the principles of the Forward-looking Strategies, was entrusted with assessing the overall political and economic situation of the country and taking the necessary steps to safeguard women's interests. The Office had established a Women's Forum, for an exchange of views on government policy. It also reviewed the enforcement of legislation pertaining to women, with a view to preventing sexual discrimination.

82. In co-operation with Indiana University, Warsaw University had sponsored in May 1990 a conference on working women in Europe and the United States, at which researchers from several countries had exchanged ideas. That event had demonstrated the importance of international meetings in promoting the advancement

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(Mr. Matela, Poland)

of women and, in that connection, his Government endorsed the convening of the 1995 world conference on women and commended the Government of Austria for its offer to host the conference.

83. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Polish Government had published the text of the treaty in the monthly bulletin of its Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and had prepared a report on the legal situation of women in Poland. It was currently drafting its third report on the implementation of the Convention. It considered broad dissemination of the periodic reports among countries to be an effective tool in the struggle to eliminate discrimination against women.

84. In view of the important research, training and information activities of INSTRAW, his Government had recently decided to contribute to the work of the Institute and to establish in Poland a Focal Point for INSTRAW.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.